
A Step into The Past

Book 01

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Chapter 1

Time Machine

Screech!

The shrill screeching caused by braking resulted in the friction between the tyres and the road sounded right in front of the city's most popular 'Black Leopard Bar'. The jeep that belonged to Team 7 of the army's special unit, regarded as the best of the best, suddenly stopped.

Amid the cheers and laughter, Xiang Shaolong and his three teammates grabbed the grills and jumped down from the car. After three months of intensive training in body and warfare in the Gobi desert, they finally have three days of leave. If they do not thoroughly enjoy life now, they would be letting down their parents who gave birth to them.

Xiang Shaolong is twenty this year. His skin glowed with a healthy tan because of his long hours under the sun. He may not be considered a handsome young man, but with his height nearing 2 meters, broad shoulders, trim waist and long legs, firm muscles with not an inch of excess fat, agile and smart eyes, pencil straight nose, perfectly rounded cheekbones, square face, matched with a lazy smile that seems to flirt with women, he definitely has the qualities that will pique the interest of any girl.

Just as they were about to enter, there was chaos and a mess of bodies landed on the ground amidst claps and curses. It was their team mates Xiao

Zhang and Man Niu (Stubborn Cow) who came earlier being thrown out of the door and landing in a heap. They were groaning to get up and although this is usually a very simple act, but now to these two top agents of the special unit, it's a very difficult task.

The expression on the four's faces changed and they rushed forward to help the two of them up. Rhino, who has a growth on his forehead, exclaimed, "How many people?"

This question is very logical. Xiao Zhang and Man Niu, like them, belong to Team 7 Special Unit. They are picked amongst the best in the whole army to receive special training as a crack team, and specialized in handling all kinds of dangerous situations like anti-terrorists missions, entering hostile countries to carry out assassination attempts or saving lives, protecting important political people etc. Their training includes the use of various weapons, unarmed combat, resistance training, survival training, various spying techniques, in fact the aim is to train them into becoming supermen. Even ten odd brawny men may not be able to harm even a single hair on them.

But since other teams have always been jealous of them, they find it an honor if they are able to take down members of Team 7. So it's quite normal for fights to break out whenever they're on leave and having drinks, but this is the first time that they have actually been thrown out of the door.

Xiao Zhang regained some of his senses, opened his bruised eyes and when he saw it's Xiang Shaolong helping him up, he exclaimed with joy, "Brother Long, go and back us up quickly!"

Everyone in the team addressed Xiang Shaolong as Brother Long, not because he's older, but because he's the sharp shooter of the team, champion of freestyle boxing, and the fittest among them.

Man Niu panted and pointed towards the inside of the bar and said, "It's Team 841's instructor Black Faced Deity, he actually had the guts to harass our ice beauty."

The four of them flew into a rage. Ice beauty Zheng Cuizhi is the secretary of their team's instructor, so how can they allow other teams to touch her when none of them have managed to woo her?

Xiang Shaolong's hands started itching once he thinks about fighting, so he puffed up his chest and shouted, "Help them in and let me show off my skills!" With that, he led them into the bar.

The spacious bar was filled with smoke and the noises and music deafening. Half of the crowd was from the army or police and foreigners and civilians numbered only about thirty. It was crowded and the mood spirited.

They had just appeared at the door when the bar suddenly became quiet.

The well built and muscular Black Faced Deity and about a dozen of his men were wearing civilian clothing and drinking and laughing with a few sexily clad ladies. Black Faced Deity was holding Ice beauty Zheng Cuizhi by her tiny waist and when she saw Xiang Shaolong, who usually ignored her coming in, she deliberately turned her sultry body towards Black Faced Deity and even kissed his cheek.

Black Faced Deity saw Xiang Shaolong and his face shone. He moved his hands lower towards Zheng Cuizhi's voluptuous butt and slapped it twice, saying with a smile, "One against one, or everyone charge!"

There's an unwritten rule in the army, which is all fights are to be fought only with fists, unless there's some great enmity, or if blinded by rage, they will not use things that can hurt like knives or broken bottles, in case things get out of hand and they get apprehended by the military police.

Xiang Shaolong saw the queen of the bar Zhou Xiangmei leaning against the table and looking at him with a smile and felt a boost of bravado. He replied with a smile, "Against someone like you, it doesn't really matter to me. Up to you."

Everyone in the bar, regardless of male or female, all cheered and added fuel to the flame, the atmosphere reaching a burning high.

Xiao Zhang moved to his side and warned with a low voice, "Be careful! That fellow's extremely good."

Someone shrieked with a strange voice, "Someone's afraid!"

The onlookers watching the show laughed even harder.

Man Niu walked over as well and whispered, "That two men Black Faced Deity are the best two champion boxers at the local martial arts school. They are prepared for a fight today with the intent of making us lose face."

Xiang Shaolong noticed the two murderous looking men long ago. ‘Taking note of your surroundings’ is the second rule out of the seven in the special task force. The first rule is ‘to be well prepared’ and the third is ‘remain calm’. This is exactly what he is going to do now. He instructed quietly, “Tell them to stay clear, I’m confident of settling those three alone.”

By now Black Faced Deity has removed his jacket and handed it to ice beauty. He took two steps forward and said coldly, “Xiang Shaolong! I’ve put up with you for a long time. The last time you injured dozens of my men at the Wild Cat Karaoke, today I will settle those old scores with you.”

Xiang Shaolong told his five friends to stand back and spread out, and he took two steps forward as well and were within four paces of Black Faced Deity. He called out calmly to the bartender, “Give me some fresh milk, I need to quench my thirst after I deal with this Black Faced Deity.”

This sentence immediately caused a roar of laughter from everyone.

Someone from Black Faced Deity’s group called out, “This lad is going to use his strength for drinking milk as well.”

Black Faced Deity leaned towards the left and made a fake move, while he deviously kicked with his leg, aiming at the position 5 inches above Xiang Shaolong’s calf.

Xiang Shaolong moved to the side and avoided the attack effortlessly.

When the crowd saw that they’re finally fighting, the started cheering and

adding fuel to fire.

Black Faced Deity roared and rushed forward with the speed of lightning, crouched when he got near and both his fists struck out towards the chest. Xiang Shaolong took another step back and avoided the enemy's fists.

When the crowd saw that he's only dodging but not retaliating, they jeered. Black Faced Deity's men also ridiculed him loudly.

Black Faced Deity thought that Xiang Shaolong is afraid of him and became even more conceited. He suddenly stuck out his middle finger and taking advantage of his lead, rushed forward and aimed a punch at his nose.

Xiang Shaolong was thinking to himself how good that he's coming. When the fist was only a few inches from his nose, he suddenly stumbled backwards, as if that punch has thrown him far back.

The crowd went mad and started shouting.

Man Niu and the rest naturally knew that he was not hit, and were perplexed why he only dodged but did not attack. That lad stumbled six steps back, leaned back and actually fell into the arms of the queen of the bar Zhou Xiangmei, who was sitting on the chair.

Zhou Xiangmei was so shocked that she screamed.

Black Faced Deity leapt forward like a crazed tiger.

Xiang Shaolong yelled and straightened his body, his right hand taking the chance to touch Zhou Xiangmei's creamy bosom, and sprang up using the strength from his waist. He shot towards Black Faced Deity like a cannon, ignoring the fact that his opponent's fists are clenched and coming down hard on his back, and his head hit his opponent right on the stomach.

Before Black Faced Deity has a chance to hit Xiang Shaolong, his opponent's head caused his almost 100kg body to stumble back like a toy with an unstoppable force and fell right on to the middle of the dance floor.

The two hundred odd people in the bar gasped in unison. Immediately the place became from being extremely noisy to being extremely quiet, leaving only the speakers at the corners of the bar playing a very groovy song.

Xiang Shaolong was like a ferocious tiger being released and leap towards Black Faced Deity who is still on the ground.

The two professional boxers who were invited by Black Faced Deity saw that the situation was amiss and both rushed out at the same time, going around Black Faced Deity who is still on the floor and attached Xiang Shaolong while sandwiching him between them.

His friends Man Niu, Xiao Zhang and the rest were all cursing and calling them shameless, but they did not help at all. No one can be more confident of Xiang Shaolong's abilities than them.

The battle ended in the blink of an eye.

Xiang Shaolong dodged a few times and avoided his enemy's attacks and squeezed in between the two of them, elbowed the person on his left under his armpit, his right hand pushing away his enemy's fist and before the man on the left fell to the ground, he gave two quick knocks with his knee on the person on his right's stomach. Black Faced Deity had just struggled to stand up but Xiang Shaolong has already given him a wicked punch on his nose just as the boxer on his right was kneeling down in pain. Black Face Deity cried out as fresh blood poured out and collapsed onto Cuizhi who was just rushing over and the two of them tumbled down.

Xiao Shaolong laughed heartily, and pointing Black Faced Deity's men, taunted them, "Come! All together now."

Man Niu and the rest rushed up, rubbing their fists and palms.

Cuizhi climbed up and shrieked, "Xiang Shaolong! You're good! Just you wait and see!"

Xiang Shaolong can't be bothered with her but walked towards the queen of the bar Zhou Xiangmei, pulled her up and walked out of the bar.

Zhou Xiangmei exclaimed, "Where are you taking me?"

Xiang Shaolong carried her up and deposited her on the passenger seat of the jeep and said with a laugh, "Home of course, I don't have enough money to pay the exorbitant price for a hotel room."

"Ring....."

Xiang Shaolong, who is used to strict training, woke up immediately and disentangled himself from Zhou Xiangmei's slender limbs and grabbed the phone.

Cuizhi's clear voice traveled to his ears, "Captain Xiang, you have 15 minutes to wash up, the Ministry of War's armored vehicle is waiting for you at the main door."

Zhou Xiangmei moaned and said, "Baddie! Come quickly!"

Xiang Shaolong rubbed his aching back, caused by the numerous rounds of 'fights' with this seductress, and exclaimed hoarsely, "Are you trying to scare me? Would a fight cause such a big trouble?"

Cuizhi said icily, "Who said it's got anything to do with the fight, it's the Science Institute who wants the fittest among our special task force for an experiment. I saw that you were so brave last night and your stamina was so surprisingly good, so I recommended you to the instructor. The instructor has given his orders!"

Naturally Xiang Shaolong knows that she's making use of the opportunity to take revenge and said with irritation, "But I'm still on leave today!"

Cuizhi laughed, "Oh my Captian Xiang, you only have leave when there's no mission. A soldier belongs to the country 24 hours a day."

Xiang Shaolong can't wait to strangle her, but he sighed instead, "Hai! I was so brave last night, all because of you. Do you really not know or are you just

pretending?”

Xiangmei wriggled out from under the blankets naked and asked, “Who are you talking to?”

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly signaled her to keep quiet.

The other end of the line was silent for a moment, before a soft voice said, “You’re lying!”

Xiang Shaolong covered Zhou Xiangmei’s tiny mouth with one hand, and glibly replied, “Why would I lie to you. I, Xiang Shaolong, thinks about you day and night, I just did not say it out! Do you know! You...”

Cuizhi interrupted him, “All right! We’ll talk about that later! You’ll only be a lab mouse for one day maximum, I’ll find someone else the next time. Get changed quickly.”

“Pak!” And she hung up.

The armored vehicle stopped outside the main door of the heavily guarded Science Institute and Xiang Shaolong was escorted inside like a prisoner by 4 soldiers and passed over to the security at the research department. He was immediately brought to a hospital ward filled with medical equipments and after going through a thorough body check-up, the doctor signed the papers with satisfaction and the nurse pushed him out of the room.

Lying on the hospital bed, Xiang Shaolong objected, “I’m not sick, I can walk

on my own.”

The nurse is obviously very interested in him and smiled as she walked and said, “Be a good boy, I know you’re not sick, in fact you’re stronger than a bull.”

Xiang Shaolong could not change his character and he immediately flirted, “Hey! What’s your name and how can I find you.”

The nurse rolled her eyes at him and did not reply.

Doors opened one by one in front and the nurse pushed him deep into the building until they reached a lift.

8 security guards were standing guard next to the lift door and they took over Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong felt a shiver in his heart and wondered what kind of experiment could this be? Why would the laboratory be in an underground cell at the Science Institute?

The lift descended by more than 10 floors before it stopped. Xiang Shaolong was pushed out by the guards and after passing a few heavily guarded doors, came to a spacious hall.

Xiang Shaolong looked around and sat up in shock.

He saw on one end of the 30 meters hall a huge metal object that looked like

a iron furnace right in front of him.

All sorts of equipment filled the hall, and it looked like the cabin of a huge spacecraft.

A hundred odd male and female researchers dressed in white coats were busy working with various equipments.

The two sides of the hall were split into two levels, the top level separated by a full length glass and inside there were countless researchers busy working on many types of unnameable equipment, and some were pointing at him through the glass.

Xiang Shaolong was confused. God! What is this all about? The serious atmosphere and the huge weaponry is not funny at all.

A male and a female researcher walked to his side, and the man smiled, "I am Professor Fang Ting, she is Professor Xie Zhimei. We're the assistants to the head engineer of this time-space project, Director Ma Ke."

Xiang Shaolong stood up and exclaimed, "What is this all about? At least tell me why I'm here!"

The average looking female professor Xie Zhimei who looked like a spinster said seriously, "Don't worry! Everything is safe, as for the details, Director Ma will tell you personally."

Professor Fang Ting added, "It's a soldier's duty to serve the country, Captain

Xiang should feel honored to be the first human experiment for the time-space project. Come!”

Xiang Shaolong shook his head and smiled bitterly, and helplessly followed them towards that huge object. Hai! What kind of luck is he having today?

Xiang Shaolong lay down in a human shaped gold box, his hands, legs, waist and neck all secured by straps and became an experiment target at their mercy.

He was just cursing Zheng Cuizhi, thinking of how he will get her after the experiment, how he will take revenge on the bed, when a bespectacled old man with white hair appeared from the top of the box and smiled at him, “I am Director Ma Ke, Captain Xiang, how do you feel?”

Xiang Shaolong snorted coldly, “I feel like an animal being sent to the slaughterhouse, and am still wondering if this slaughterhouse is for pigs or cows.”

Director Ma laughed dryly, “Captian Xiang sure knows how to joke.” He paused and asked, “Which period of our country’s history are you more familiar with?”

Xiang Shaolong was surprised, “What has this got to do with the experiment?”

Director Ma was displeased and said, “Answer my question first.”

Xiang Shaolong can only blame it on his bad luck, and wanting to end this quickly, he replied after a thought, "I'm not familiar with history, but recently I saw that movie 'Emperor Qin', and was really envious of his Epang Palace and his indulgence in life, and I read a few books about the warring states and Emperor Qin..."

Director Ma interrupted impatiently, "Hey! That's enough, so it's the Qin dynasty, 246BC, the first year Emperor Qin ascended the throne." Then he repeated the year into the intercom clipped on his white shirt collar.

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in shock, "My god! What are you saying?"

Director Ma became excited and his old face glowed. He reached out and touched Xiang Shaolong's cheek and said with a smile, "Friend! You don't know how lucky you are, to become the first man in history to go back in time."

Xiang Shaolong did not understand him and said, "You..."

Director Ma was not interested in what he has to say at all and interrupted excitedly, "Did you watch that show 'Time Tunnel' on television. Look! In front of you is the great time tunnel, this is no longer a dream, but a reality. Very soon I will change humankind's perception about time and space..."

Xiang Shaolong was lying in the box so naturally he could not see anything at all. He struggled and said, "Stop joking, tell me what experiment am I here for?"

Director Ma's excitement was undiminished, and he continued rambling, "Later you will be sent into the time furnace, and once I press one button, the hydrogen reaction furnace fixed at the bottom will gather enough energy within 36 hours to produce enough thermoneuclear in the furnace to make a black hole to go past time and space. By then the magnetic field conveyor will send you back to the world of the past, how marvelous do you think that is."

Cold sweat broke out and Xiang Shaolong looked at this mad scientist who is not much different from a lunatic and said, "Are you joking."

Director Ma said, "Of course I'm not joking. I have successfully sent 20 white mice and 2 monkeys back and returned them safely. But a pity they could not tell me where exactly they have been, and how they felt. That's why I asked the army to provide us with the fittest warrior to experiment, and that person is you, Xiang Shaolong."

Xiang Shaolong was scared out of his wits and he cried out, "I don't agree, I want to quit the army immediately."

Director Ma said unhappily, "Don't be nervous, you'll be there for less than 10 seconds, just like a short dream. I only want you to remember what happened in the dream. You can give the injection now."

Xiang Shaolong was still protesting when one of the staff came and gave him an injection. As he gradually lost his senses, the cover was lowered and became a sturdy metal box. It was moved and pushed into the round entrance of the time furnace.

All the equipment in the laboratory immediately started working and numerous indicator lights lighted up. Close to 400 researchers were at work, concentrating on working and observing the equipments.

Time passed on slowly, and a few hours passed.

Director Ma who went to the main control centre became more and more excited, his eyes gleaming.

The final moment will soon arrive, the laboratory began a countdown from 100.

“60, 59, 58...”

The alarm suddenly went off.

The researcher in charge of supervising the energy field inside the furnace cried out in alarm, “The energy level in the time furnace is rising abnormally fast, Director Ma please advise if we should switch off the energy source immediately.”

“48, 47...”

All the staff had their eyes fixated on Director Ma.

“39, 38, 37...”

Director Ma looked at the readings on the machine showing the energy level

in the furnace, his forehead breaking out in cold sweat. He hesitated for a moment and suddenly waved his hand and ordered, "Implement the fifth emergency procedure now!"

A thunderous sound could be heard from within the furnace, and the whole laboratory started shaking, intense and hot white rays of light shot out of the cracks in the time furnace.

Before anyone had a chance to scream, the whole hidden underground laboratory was shattered into pieces by the strong explosion, and not a single thing remained. Naturally no one was left alive.

Chapter 2

Ancient Beauty

Xiang Shaolong woke up suddenly, his whole body in intense pain. He suddenly realized he's now falling from a great height.

"Crash!" Tiles flew all over and he felt himself crashing through a roof right into a house, and landed on a man. Groans and the sound of bones cracking can be heard.

It was followed by a female's scream and in his daze he seem to see the back of a naked woman running out, then he passed out.

Without knowing how many days have passed, in between bouts of consciousness, he seems to feel a woman taking care of him meticulously. Helping to clean his body and change his clothes, treating his wounds, feeding him goat's milk. Finally on a certain night, he woke up. The scene that appeared before his eyes made him draw in a gasp of cold air.

Heavens! Where is this place?

He was lying on a soft and thick carpet, an oil lamp hanging on the wall. The dim light shone weakly in this crude house about 10 square meters large with mud and hay as walls and tiles as woof. On one side of the wall, rain coats and hats made from straw hung on it, and at the corner of the house there's a fire pit with no fire. At its side there were cauldrons, stove, plates, bowls

etc, primitive cooking equipment that can only be seen in museums. There were a few chests of different sizes on the other end, and there was a copper mirror on one of the chests.

Xiang Shaolong felt a chill in his heart.

That crazy director said he will only be here for 10 seconds, so why is he still in this nightmarish place. Could he really have gone back to Emperor Qin's hometown.

Footsteps were heard.

Xiang Shaolong stared at the wooden door, his heart beating quickly, praying that this is only part of the experiment, a prank set up by Crazy Ma to trick him into believing that he's really gone back to the past in that accursed furnace.

The wooden door was pushed open.

A beautiful lady wearing ancient hemp garment who could only possibly appear in movies appeared. She has a red scarf on her head, her long hair parted in the center, swept to the sides, tucked behind her ear and plaited into two braids. She carried a bottle, and on her feet she wore straw sandals and walked in.

She looked pretty, her figure nice and slim, and when her lively eyes saw Xiang Shaolong staring at her in shock, she was so startled she almost dropped the bottle. She hurriedly put it down, knelt down in front of him, her

slender hands touching his forehead. She said some words very quickly in her melodious voice, her face full of joy.

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, "It's the end." and fainted again.

The sunlight irritated his eyes, waking him up. The house was quiet without anyone else.

He's in a better shape than the last time. Besides he's always been optimistic, so he stopped trying to think and tried to get up. He came out from beneath the blanket and realized he is now dressed in a weird looking ancient clothing that is at least two sizes too small. His collar crisscrossed around his front from the back of his neck and dropped straight to the ground. At the bottom he was wearing an apron like leather shorts, and looked absolutely ugly.

Xiang Shaolong suppressed the urge to hide beneath the blankets again and looked ahead. He saw that the roof was recently mended and remembered that when he dropped down from the sky, he landed on a man.

Is that person dead or alive? If he has hurt someone, why is that pretty ancient young woman treating him so nicely!

With all these questions puzzling him, he stood up.

He felt a wave of dizziness, and after a moment he found himself leaning in front of the window, his hands grabbing the sill, supporting his body. The sunlight shone on his face, making him feel a little better.

What really happened? Has something gone wrong with that accursed experiment? Why isn't he back yet? Will he be forever unable to return? Wouldn't his family and friends be really worried? And there's no way he can have his great revenge in bed with Zheng Cuizhi now.

Xiang Shaolong is so miserable that he could cry.

The weather is so hot, if only he can have a can of soft drink.

He looked out and saw the lush green grass, abnormally blue sky and clouds that looked even whiter and cleaner than cotton.

Xiang Shaolong's heart lurched, and knew that he has really gone back to the past. Why else would there be such an unpolluted sky.

The skin on his limbs has scars from the burn and luckily his is healthy and his skin is now renewing the cells, so it's not too serious.

After wallowing in self-pity for a moment, Xiang Shaolong felt his energy rapidly returning and his curiosity rising.

What is the world like outside? Can he really find the tyrannous Emperor Qin as depicted in the movies?

He pushed the door open and walked out. It turned out he is in a quiet little valley, a stream flowing down the back of the house out of the valley. On the right of the stream he seem to hear a girl's singing. On the left is a mulberry forest, a place to cultivate silkworms.

Once he thought of the ancient beauty, Xiang Shaolong's mood lifted and he walked towards the sound of the singing.

The girl was dressed in white, her skirt pulled up and tucked into the waist, revealing the thin chemise under the skirt and a pair of round and slender legs. She was squatting at the side of the stream washing clothes and cutlery, her expression languid and humming an unknown folksong.

Xiang Shaolong saw her revealing herself, and she's quite pretty as well and desire filled him so he walked over. However he was still unsteady on his feet and stepped on a loose rock. He exclaimed in alarm and fell into the stream.

That beauty was startled and jumped into the water to help him.

Xiang Shaolong stood up in the chest deep stream and the girl happened to reach him and grabbed his hands to place it on her shoulder.

Xiang Shaolong was roused and took advantage of the situation to lean onto her fragrant body.

The lady spoke to him in shock and concern with a string of words.

This time Xiang Shaolong's brains is more alert and after some concentration he understood most of what she said. It sounded like a difficult dialect used around Hebei or Shanxi region. He vaguely figured out that she was reprimanding him for running around before he has fully recovered, and was so full of gratitude that he blurted out, "Thank you Miss!"

That lady was stunned for a moment. She stared at him and asked, “Where did you come from?”

This sentence may be difficult to understand, but Xiang Shaolong finally guessed the meaning and was immediately dumbfounded. What can he say? Tell her that he came from the 21st century in a time machine?

The two of them were still standing in the water, totally drenched. It doesn't matter to Xiang Shaolong but that beauty's clothes were thin and after being wet it showed off her curves, and she's no different from being naked.

The lady saw Xiang Shaolong's hot eyes staring at her chest. She blushed and immediately forgot her question, and hurriedly helped him to shore.

Xiang Shaolong can't help but take the opportunity to lightly knock into her breasts and the lady's face blushed even redder, but she did not object or reprimand him.

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic. It seems that the beauties of this era is even more open than those in the 21st century. All those talk about not taking 3 steps beyond the house or having to marry the man once he sees her body were all far fetched, or it's those hateful Confusionist lecturing about morals during later years.

So it seems that, even if he does not return to the 21st century for the time being, life would not be too boring.

Xiang Shaolong changed out of his wet clothes and sat opposite to the

beauty, eating the rice she cooked, with vegetables, mutton and braised meat marinated with five spices.

Maybe because he's hungry, but Xiang Shaolong enjoyed the meal, all the food tasted especially delicious, even better than peking duck or hamburgers.

The beauty ate and looked at him with interest at the same time.

Xiang Shaolong was thinking to himself that this is such a secluded place, and not a village or even another house could be seen, and yet she seems to be living a fulfilling life. Could it be that the past is really better than the present?

The beauty said something softly.

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, "What?"

The beauty repeated her words and this time he understood. She was saying that he's very tall, and she has never seen someone so tall.

He was secretly laughing that people of this era must all be short, and asked her, "What is your name?"

The beauty shook her head to indicate she could not understand his question and encouraged him to repeat 3 more times before she replied, "The people of Mulberry Forest Village all call me Mei Canniang. (Pretty Silkworm Lady)"

This time it is Xiang Shaolong's turn to not understand. By the time he

clarified it, the two of them were laughing happily. So Xiang Shaolong told her his name as well. The conversation flowed with such tries, failures and continuous work, neither party wanting it to end. When Xiang Shaolong is 80% confident of understanding her dialect, he asked her about what happened the day he fell in through the roof.

Mei Canniang blushed slightly and said, “The man you crushed to death the other day is a bandit from a neighboring village called Jiao Du. He followed me home all the way from the market and was going to rape me. Luckily young master fell down from the sky and crushed him to death. I’ve buried him in the mulberry forest.” She paused for a moment, her face reddened to the ears and she lowered her head and said shyly, “I was married to two brothers, but they were forcefully conscripted into the army by bad people and were killed in Chang Ping.”

The battle of Chang Ping, isn’t it one of the famed battles between Qin and Zhao, where the army of Qin killed all 400,000 of the Zhao’s army. Xiang Shaolong hurriedly asked, “How long ago did this happen?”

Mei Canniang replied, “It happened 9 years ago.”

The battle of Chang Ping happened in 260BC, then isn’t it 251BC now. Crazy Director Ma wanted to send him back to 246BC which is the year Emperor Qin ascended the throne, and although he’s off by 5 years, but considering the facts he’s still quite accurate.

He asked, “What is this place?”

Mei Canniang replied, "Didn't I tell you, it's Mulberry Village!"

Xiang Shaolong asked, "Is this part of the kingdom of Zhao?"

Mei Canniang shook her head, "I don't understand what you're talking about? I only know what happens in Mulberry Village, the news of my husbands death were told to me by the people in the market."

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in surprise, "You really married two husbands at the same time?"

Mei Canniang replied, "Of course it's true!"

Xiang Shaolong sighed quietly to himself. Although he has read a few books about the Warring States, but he's not familiar with the customs during this period at all, so he put aside this question and continued, "Did you not bear any children for them?"

Mei Canniang replied quietly, "After the two fathers of the children left, life was extremely difficult and the children all died of sickness. Later I learned to keep silkworms and life finally settled."

Xiang Shaolong felt pity for her, this beauty has suffered much.

Mei Canniang said quietly, "I have been praying to Heaven everyday, praying to her to bestow me a husband. Just when I was at my saddest, Heaven opened her eyes and dropped you for me. I am so ecstatic, from now on you will be Canniang's husband."

Xiang Shaolong was absolutely dumbfounded. But it's not too bad as well, he need not put in so much effort to explain where he came from.

Hai! It seems that he'll have to depend on her to support him. Suddenly he had a flash of inspiration, and thought that in 251BC, Emperor Qin is still destitute in Handan, the capital of Zhao. If he can find and befriend him, when he becomes the emperor in future, then won't his fortunes rise as well, and can have anything he want, including beauties? Once he thought of this, his heart itched and he asked, "Do you know the way to Handan?"

Mei Canniang shook her head at a loss, then her face turned pale and she chewed her lower lips and stammered, "Are you thinking of leaving this place?"

Xiang Shaolong climbed over, stuck himself to her fragrant back, his hands reaching forward to hold her little tummy and said gently, "Don't be afraid! No matter where I go, I'll bring you with me."

Mei Canniang's body softened at his touch and she exclaimed happily, "Really!"

Xiang Shaolong nibbled her ear lobes and replied, "Of course!"

Mei Canniang's two husbands were all coarse and unrefined men, so she has never encountered such flirtatious teasing, her slender body shook and she said, "I'm going to the market tomorrow, I'll ask someone then! Someone will surely know where Handan is."

Xiang Shaolong put his huge hand into her clothes and kneaded her voluptuous bosom, asking “That bandit Jiao Du, did he... heh... what you?”

Mei Canniang panted, “He just took off my clothes, and have not... Ai!” Her lips have been locked.

Xiang Shaolong has never seen such a gentle and accommodating beauty, so he hurriedly showed her his best moves. The whole room was heated up and moans and pants joined together to form an orchestra. Mei Canniang, who has been alone for so many years, finally tasted for the first time the joy of being an equal with men in the act of copulation.

Xiang Shaolong felt an itch in his nose and sneezed. He woke up and saw that it was Mei Canniang teasing him with a mulberry leaf.

The sun has not risen.

He hugged Mei Canniang and pressed her down, using his body to put pressure on her sensitive areas, and even pushed her buttocks up with his hand so that she cannot avoid him while he greedily kissed her wet lips. Mei Canniang was totally caught unawares and almost lost her senses from the teasing. She kept crying out, and who knows if she was expressing her joy or objection.

Xiang Shaolong flipped her skirt over, revealing her round yet firm thighs, and was about to proceed when Mei Canniang moaned with a flush, “Shaolong! We have to go to the market immediately!”

Xiang Shaolong came to his senses immediately and stopped his assault. He warned her, “Do you still dare to be mischievous?”

Mei Canniang covered her mouth and laughed, “Yes! But not now, if we don’t go to the market now we won’t even have food for today.”

Xiang Shaolong was aroused by her heated body and hesitated, “It won’t take too much time to do it just once, right?”

Mei Canniang suddenly hugged him and said gently, “My good man! Besides eating some food after lunch yesterday, you have been doing it to me until I fell asleep. You’re even more capable than my two husbands added together and now you want to continue. Are you trying to kill me! Get up quickly!”

Xiang Shaolong thought of her hunger and charm last night and felt desire again, but once he thought of looking for Emperor Qin, he can only suppress his lust and climbed out.

Mei Canniang took out a set of clothes and said, “I made this for you when you were unconscious, you’ll certainly look very good wearing it.”

With her help, Xiang Shaolong wore it and it fitted him perfectly. It may be made of coarse material and hemp but Mei Canniang’s eyes shone on seeing it and complimented him, “Mei Canniang has never seen any man as handsome as you in the world.” And used a cloth to tie his growing hair before going on their way after washing up.

Xiang Shaolong carried a whole bag of silk, with a hatchet around his waist, straw shoes on his feet and followed Mei Canniang out of the valley, towards the ancient civilization 2000 years ago.

Chapter 3

Showing off for the first time

The two of them walked down the hill in the darkness preceding dawn, towards the marketplace beyond the endless hills.

Xiang Shaolong has never felt so much love and infatuation towards any women before. He carried her and ran down. To a warrior like him who has gone through special training, this is as easy as breathing.

However Mei Canniang was extremely surprised, but once she thought that he is a gift from Heaven, she no longer felt bewildered.

Xiang Shaolong asked her effortlessly, "How did you end up marrying that two brothers? Where is your own family?"

Mei Canniang screamed in shock just as he jumped. She patted her chest and her pretty face was blushing from the excitement. She replied, "I live in a place that is 3 day's journey towards the sun. One day, the two brothers came with 10 tiger skins, 1 bear skin, 50 marten skins, 5 cows and 100 goats and gave to my father in exchange for me. Our tribe has never seen such extravagant gifts, so I married them."

Xiang Shaolong carried her up by her waist and waded through a 3 meter wide river, thinking to himself that if he has the latest AK47, then he can hunt for tiger skins in exchange for women. He asked her, "How old were you then?"

Mei Canniang held on to his neck tightly and whispered in his ear, “14!”

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in surprise, “What? That’s below the legal age for intercourse!”

When they reached the main road outside the mountainous area, the sun revealed it’s first ray of light.

This couple who should have been separated by over 2000 years walked closely side by side, chatting happily.

Mei Canniang finally found someone, and after spending the most exciting and romantic night in her life, she was ecstatic. She was pulling Xiang Shaolong like a little girl, kicking her little straw sandals, walking cheerfully. The painful journey in the past has now become an endless joy, and she said with a laugh, “In the past I had to walk at least 20 hours to the market, but ever since someone built this road for military transport, it takes only 8 hours to reach the market. A lot of time has been saved.”

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, so war can actually promote the development of transportation, and indirectly boost the economy and increase efficiency. So it seems that, in this era, there are advantages to wars.

Hai! A pity he can’t bring anything here. If he has a machinegun, or even a gun, he may become the highest paid soldier in this warring states period.

He can’t help but laugh once he thought of this.

Then he thought of the queen of bars Zhou Xiangmei and Zhang Cuizhi who caused him to end up in this state. And his parents, they always said that he's unfilial, his 2 older brothers and 3 older sisters are all better than him. Now that he's gone, he reckons that they won't be too sad. But he still felt that this is not the case. A pity that he can't give them a call right now to tell them that he's safe.

The sound of wheels grating along the ground sounded behind. It turned out to be a mule cart going towards the market, with a dozen or so white sheep on it. On the cart there were an old and a young man dressed as farmers and when they gave a friendly greeting, they were surprised and scrutinized the tall and well-built Xiang Shaolong. In contrast, they weren't too surprised about Mei Canniang's beauty.

After the mule cart was far gone, a few horses ran swiftly past and the men riding them were dressed like ancient warriors, on their horses there were bows, swords, axes etc, but they were not from the army.

The two of them avoided them and stood aside.

Mei Canniang spoke in his ear, "These warriors are all for hire. They help merchants transport money, and it's the most profitable business."

Xiang Shaolong laughed, "Ha! Finally there's a job suitable for me!"

Mei Canniang shrieked, "No! I cannot lose a husband like you again."

Xiang Shaolong was startled and after reassuring her, they continued on their

way.

The nearer they got to the market, the more crowded the roads became. Most of them were pushing wooden carts with a single wheel, carrying various goods like corn, millet, sorghum, rice, wheat, garlic, cows, goats etc and all of them were hurrying towards the same destination.

Only now did Xiang Shaolong realize how huge he is. The tallest among the people is still shorter than him by half a head and he looked around complacently, feeling like a crane among chickens.

After another hour, they finally arrived at the market.

40 odd kinds of mud houses, straw houses and stone houses were lined up untidily on two sides, forming a wide street. Various kinds of harvests and animals, buyers and sellers filled the mud road that was about half a mile long, a feeling of festivity filled the air.

They had just stepped into the market when Mei Canniang cried out quietly in fear, "Look! The group of men on the left is the bandit Jiao Du's brothers. They're staring at us, what should we do?"

Xiang Shaolong gathered his wits and walked alertly forward.

A group of 10 odd powerful looking men who are obviously the town bullies were standing or sitting in front of a mud house but their eyes were fixed onto them in astonishment.

Mei Canniang continued, “They surely know about Jiao Du looking for me, and thought that I’ve become his woman. So when they saw it’s you instead, they were astonished. Oh dear, we better leave immediately!”

Xiang Shaolong scrutinized the crude metal swords they carried with his professional judgment and gave them a suave smile. He said to Mei Canniang, “My wife, do not panic. Your husband is here, no one will be able to hurt a single hair of yours.” He realized that the words he used is getting more and more similar to what these ancient people uses that he can’t help but laugh out loud.

Mei Canniang was so frightened her face turned pale, and pulled him towards the other end of what you can hardly call a ‘street’.

The two of them melted into the crowd. While others were sizing him up, Xiang Shaolong was taking note of his surroundings without any concern.

All these people from the warring states, just from the way they dressed, he can tell that they came from different places. Regardless of men or women, most of them have a flat face, short, rough skin, very few of them has the same alluring body and pretty face like Mei Canniang. But they all looked simple and honorable, giving others a good impression.

The only exception was the men and women wearing unique red headpieces. Their hats were not like the hats that he’s used to, which covers the top of a person’s head. Instead it covers only the hair, which was tied into a bun, two red ropes hanging down from the side and tied into a knot under the chin.

The men and women of this tribe were not only tall and good looking, the women were fair and wore extremely sexy short tops and skirts which bared the chest and arms. It really was an eye-opener for him and quite unbelievable as well, changing his perception that all ancient people must be conservative.

A few of those young women were exceptionally outstanding, almost as pretty as Mei Canniang, and almost all of them trade in horses.

When Xiang Shaolong made eye contact with the prettiest girl among them, those beauties all made eyes at this fine specimen of a man from another dimension, not at all bothered that his eyes was fixated on their half naked chest and slender legs.

Mei Canniang felt much safer once they're among the crowd and when she saw his lecherous look, she's not offended at all. She said quietly, "They're all from the Baiyi tribe, expert in rearing horses. All the men and women are very good hunters, no one dares to bully them."

Xiang Shaolong felt his heart itching, but he was pulled into a mud house by Mei Canniang who took over the silk he was carrying and proceeded to do business with the man inside.

Xiang Shaolong took the opportunity to slip out of the house.

"Dang! Dang! Dang!"

Copper bells sounded in the biggest stone house opposite, and someone

shouted, "Quality horse for 30 coppers! Quality horse for 30 coppers!"

Xiang Shaolong was curious and walked forward. On the stairs of the large house stood ten over huge men wearing similar clothes as those riders they met on the way here. One of them wore a tall headpiece, his clothes were comparatively more splendid, a difference of heaven and earth with the coarse clothes worn by the farmers.

He may have good eyesight, but from a distance of over ten meters, he can only see that person has a square face and large ears, with a solemn look, and carried with him an air of affluence.

There was an immediate commotion in the market as the horse traders all squeezed forward with their horses and the situation was chaotic.

Right at this time, he heard a cold snort next to him.

By the time Xiang Shaolong was aware, those brothers of Jiao Du have already surrounded him heavily.

He unhurriedly took 2 steps back, and pushed Mei Canniang back into the house just as she was walking out. He asked quietly, "Does one have to go to jail for murder here?"

Mei Canniang asked in surprise, "What is jail?"

Xiang Shaolong rephrased his question, "Does anyone care if someone gets killed?"

Mei Canniang understood a little and replied, “Besides their own tribesmen, no one else will bother.” She then added, “You’re not going to fight with so many of them right? They have swords! I can give them the money I’ve just bartered for.”

Xiang Shaolong was assured and thought, in this time period, nothing is more useful than strength and martial arts. All the tough training he had in the past will not go to waste at all.

One of Jiao Du’s brother shouted, “Mei Canniang! Where is Big Brother Jiao? And who is this stinking man?”

By now those people on the street are starting to realize that something is happening here and all came forward to watch the show. Even that well dressed man who is here to buy horses and his men all stopped their trade and walked towards them.

Xiang Shaolong, who is used to creating trouble and fighting was assured and he laughed loudly, “Your Big Brother Jiao has been killed, come over if you want revenge.”

Mei Canniang was so frightened that she shivered and hugged him tightly from behind.

The expression on their faces changed at the same time and with a ‘swish’ they all pulled out their swords.

Xiang Shaolong slowly pushed Mei Canniang away and pulled out the hatchet

from his waist. Immediately there were sighs and pitying noises coming from the crowd, saying that he does not know his own capability, actually using a hatchet to block swords.

2 burly men rushed towards him with their swords raised, slashing towards him from the left and right.

The crowd screamed, and one of the Baiyi beauties who were making eyes with Xiang Shaolong covered her eyes, not daring to look further.

Xiang Shaolong roared and his hatchet swung forward fast as lightning.

In his nearly 10 years of strict training, there is a saying that anything can be used as a weapon. These two men in front may be brave and ruthless, but he does not take them into account at all. He can even easily defeat them empty handed, much less with a hatchet in his hands now.

“Clang clang”, the long swords were swept away. Xiang Shaolong ran forward like an arrow, his left fist punching a man’s face, his leg giving a flying kick towards the other man’s groin.

The two of them immediately cried and fell down, their long swords dropping from their hands.

Xiang Shaolong then retreated to where Mei Canniang was, his hatchet held in front of him, with a combat ready pose, shouting at the shocked crowd, “Come!”

The rest hesitated, not one of them dared to lead the fight. They have never imagined that there are such swift and vicious attacks.

Xiang Shaolong gave a long laugh and leapt out like a ferocious tiger, his hatchet slashing down and was embroiled in a battle with those 20 odd people.

He moved swiftly so that the enemy has no chance to group together and in no time they all fell to the ground, either felled by his punches or his kicks.

The crowd kept cheering for him, obviously they've had enough of those bullies.

When Xiang Shaolong became the ultimate winner, he picked up the best sword among the pile and tied it to his waist.

The crowd cried out, and a few people rushed forward followed by the rest of the crowd. They picked up sticks or hoes or similar weapons and starting hitting those bullies on the ground. It seems that in the face of public fury, none of them will be able to survive.

Mei Canniang ran over and hugged him tightly, exclaiming, "Heavens! You're really brave! I will never have to fear bullies again."

Xiang Shaolong hugged her and walked towards the other end of the street and asked nonchalantly, "Have you found out how to get to Handan?"

Mei Canniang replied, "There's some who have heard of this place, but do

not know how to get there.”

Footsteps can be heard behind them and someone called out, “Brave man, please hold your steps!”

Xiang Shaolong turned around while still hugging Mei Canniang and saw that man dressed in fine robes who was buying horses walking towards them.

Xiang Shaolong, Mei Canniang, and that well dressed man sat down on the floor in a big room.

Xiang Shaolong studied the man, and guessed that he’s about 40 years old, his features gives an impression of intelligence and his skin smooth. Obviously he has never done any manual labor in his life and compared to the farmers at the market, it’s like the difference between a city man and a poor country man.

That man introduced himself, “I am Tao Fang, one of the 12 servants of Master Wu. Brave hero, your accent sounds strange, I wonder where you’re from?”

Xiang Shaolong said, “My wife and I are both from Mulberry Village. I wonder if Master Tao has invited me here for some deals?”

Tao Fang looked perplexed, obviously not understanding his choice of words, so he could only guess part of the meaning. Luckily he’s used to trading with various tribes, so he nodded and said, “Is brave hero interested in earning a large sum of money.”

Xiang Shaolong looked at Mei Canniang.

She gave a sweet smile and nodded, indicating that she has no objections to any decisions he makes. To her, a man's words are orders.

Xiang Shaolong felt released from the binds of military rules, and feeling carefree, nodded, "Would Master Tao please enlighten me!"

Tao Fang leaned forward and said excitedly, "With brave hero's marvelous skills, you can block 100 men with ease. If you agree to become my bodyguard, I can pay you 50 coppers every month, what do you think?"

Mei Canniang exclaimed "Ah!", grabbed his arm and uttered, "That's enough to sustain us for one year."

Xiang Shaolong took a whiff at her face and replied, "The offer is very attractive, but we're planning to go to Handan!"

A hint of a smile appeared at the corner of Tao Fang's lips and he said calmly, "Hero must not have heard of the great name of our Master Wu. He is the finest 'King of Livestock' in Handan. After collecting enough horses all over the place, we will send them to Handan. If hero will become my bodyguard, won't it be killing two birds with one stone."

Xiang Shaolong replied joyously, "But I'm going to bring her along!"

Tao Fang looked at Mei Canniang and laughed, "Don't worry! Besides buying fine horses, we also purchase beauties from various places, so there's no

problem at all if hero wants to bring your beauty along.” He furrowed his brows as he looked at his clothes and continued, “I’ll order someone to clean up a place for you and your wife to rest as well as get you some new clothes. We’ll return to Handan at the break of dawn tomorrow. What weapons do you use, if it’s swords, I’ll immediately give you a good sword made by an old blacksmith in Handan. You can throw away the one you picked up earlier.”

Xiang Shaolong burst out laughing, and asked “How long will it take to get to Handan?”

Tao Fang has obviously taken a liking to him and replied without irritation, “On a fast horse, about 10 days. But the way we are going to travel, and having to purchase horses and beauties on the way, we’ll take at least a month.”

Xiang Shaolong was in a good mood, and once he thought that he’ll be able to find Emperor Qin in Handan, he immediately said there’s no problem.

So this matter was thus settled.

Tao Fang ordered someone to bring him to a camp near the market. The person who led the way is Li Shan, also a bodyguard. He was very impressed with his skills, so naturally he was extremely respectful.

The camp was heavily guarded, with a guard in front of the 30 odd tents, either to prevent the beauties from escaping, or to prevent thieves.

Next to the camp there was a temporary erected horse enclosure, with more

than a hundred horses kept in there.

Li Shan introduced Xiang Shaolong to the head of the bodyguards Dou Liang. The fierce looking warrior sized him up coldly and said disdainfully, "Since Brother Xiang is so capable, I must exchange pointers with you when I have the chance." After he spoke, he eyed Mei Canniang lecherously, obviously disregarding Xiang Shaolong's presence.

Li Shan was a little embarrassed and led the two of them to a tent at the edge of the camp and left after a few words.

The two went into the tent.

Mei Canniang lowered her head and did not speak, but it was obvious she was troubled.

Xiang Shaolong hugged her and said gently, "There's no need to be afraid of that Dou Liang. Sooner or later I'll find a chance to teach him a lesson. I, Xiang Shaolong is not afraid of any bullies at all." And he can't help but think of Black Faced Deity.

Mei Canniang said quietly, "City folks are all deceitful, I'm afraid I won't be used to that kind of life."

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that modern folks are a hundred times worse than you ancient people, but he assured her, "With me to protect you, what is there to fear?"

Mei Canniang's eyes reddened, collapsed into his arms and cried piteously, "Everyone who lives in Mulberry Forest Village are good people, our lives fulfilling, getting better year by year. And now that the bullies Jiao Du and his men are dead, it'll be even more peaceful. Husband! Why don't we return there to stay, happily until we grow old and die, and I'll have children with you, isn't that better?"

Xiang Shaolong sighed secretly, he's so used to indulgences in life, how will he ever get used to such a life. He said gently, "Why don't we do this! I'll borrow 100 coppers from Tao Fang, that'll be enough for your living expenses for 2 years, and I'll forge a path in Handan. Once I am successful, I'll come back for you, won't that benefit both of us?"

Mei Canniang stammered, "Won't it mean that I'll have to part from you?"

Xiang Shaolong replied, "At the earliest it'll take a few months, the latest one to two years, I will definitely return. Don't forget that I am sent by Heaven, so I'll definitely not die."

Mei Canniang wailed, and just when Xiang Shaolong was at a loss, she came to a decision and tearfully agreed to Xiang Shaolong's suggestion.

Once they thought of the impending parting, the two of them engaged in joyous acts in the tent until dinnertime, when they left the tent to join Tao Fang for dinner. He brought up the topic of paying his salary in advance and without a second word, Tao Fang gave him 200 coppers straightaway. Xiang Shaolong can't help but feel impressed.

But that head of bodyguards Dou Liang was extremely jealous.

Tao Fang asked in passing again Xiang Shaolong's origins, but Xiang Shaolong still insisted that he's from Mulberry Forest Village, so Tao Fang did not press the issue.

Early that night they returned to the tent and continued in their engagements until the next morning. After an unwilling parting, Mai Canniang returned to Mulberry Forest Village alone while Xiang Shaolong followed Tao Fang towards the unknown Capital of Zhao, starting on his journey to look for Emperor Qin.

Chapter 4

Surrounded by Danger

They walked for less than 2 hours when it started raining heavily.

The 100 odd warriors wore their straw raincoats, escorting 12 horse carriages and almost 200 fine horses and moved forward with much aplomb.

Xiang Shaolong thought about Mei Canniang, thought about her tears as she parted, and felt an indescribable sadness. He almost had the urge to turn back and look for her but he remembered he had taken 200 coppers from Tao Fang and stopped himself. He is not someone who will go back on his words. He must at least work for a few months as a bodyguard.

The rain only stopped at dusk and the entourage stopped and pitched tents. 60 odd young girls came out of the horse carriages, all of them young and beautiful. A few among them were exceptionally pretty, comparable to Mei Canniang.

Although they all looked tired, but they were all in high spirits, not like slaves who have just been bought at all. They even helped to cook and talk and laugh with the warriors, which baffled Xiang Shaolong.

The girls realized that now there's another handsome man, Xiang Shaolong, so they all made eyes at him. A pity that he has lost the mood to flirt because he missed Mei Canniang and instead he went for a walk outside the camp.

The wilderness after the rain was crisply green, the air refreshing.

Xiang Shaolong can't help but feel sentimental.

No matter how pretty nature is, how alluring the world in front of him is, but surrounding him was undeveloped land, endless forests. It's only the beginning of man's destruction towards nature. But by the 21st century, they have reached the end of this path of no return, and humankind had to suffer the consequences.

If he has the power to change all these, would history be re-written?

"Shh!"

Xiang Shaolong was startled.

Amidst the rustling leaves, a Baiyi girl wearing a sleeveless top and short skirt, which revealed her rounded thighs, jumped out. It turned out to be the prettiest Baiyi girl he met the other day at the market.

She went to him excitedly and looked up to him, saying, "I've been following you for 2 days and nights." She pulled him and said nervously, "Escape quickly!"

Xiang Shaolong pulled her into his arms instead and holding her tightly by her waist, kissed her lips.

The Baiyi lady reacted fierily, even hugging his strong neck, not at all shy.

Xiang Shaolong is believing more and more that women of this era, once they meet a man they like, are more direct than women from the 21st century, and felt his spirits lifting.

The Baiyi girl left his mouth, her pretty face blushed an endearing red and said hurriedly, "My name is Xiu Yi, come back with me to Mount Baiyi! If you follow those Zhao people to Handan, you'll certainly be killed by Hui Hu and his group of horse thieves."

Xiang Shaolong listened to her melodious voice, enjoying her voluptuous body, and his desire was just rising when he was suddenly shocked and asked, "What did you say?" In reality he only understood about 30 to 40 percent of her words.

The Baiyi girl Xiu Yi slowed down and said each word clearly, "A few days ago, our tribesmen received news, Hui Hu and his 800 horse thieves were preparing to lay an ambush for the Zhao people at Dashi Valley to steal their women and horses. If you go with them, you'll surely be killed. They're a lot more formidable than Jiao Du and his men."

Xiang Shaolong finally understood, his two ill-mannered hands continuously caressing her chest and buttocks and laughed, "Don't worry! I have a way to deal with them."

Xiu Yi smiled coquettishly, using her chest to press against him and her arms to rub against him, asked with a smile, "I know you will not abandon your friends to save your own life, I shall not force you. But I've given you such useful information, how are you going to thank me?"

Xiang Shaolong smiled bitterly, “Besides copper coins, you can have anything else.”

Xiu Yi disentangled herself from his arms and turned a circle in front of him, saying with a flirtatious smile, “Everyone says that I’m pretty, do you agree? I still do not know your name!”

Xiang Shaolong stared at her, all his worries gone and replied, “I’m Xiang Shaolong!”

Xiu Yi repeated it a few times, and suddenly loosened her clothes, revealing a fair body that can make any man dizzy. She said with a smile, “Would this be prettier? The men in the tribe all love to look at my body.”

This is the first time Xiang Shaolong has seen a girl like that, he breathed in deeply and ordered, “Come here!”

Xiu Yi threw herself into his arms, and as she took off his clothes, she moaned, “It’s always men who have begged me, but this time I’m begging you. Come! Lover! I have not gone home for 2 days, if you did not come out I’d have gone into the camp to look for you.”

Xiang Shaolong returned to camp all relaxed and looked for Tao Fang. He pulled him to a corner and told him everything that just happened.

Tao Fang’s expression became very somber and after a while, reached out and placed his hand on his shoulder and said, “You have saved my life this time. The problem now is not those horse thieves, but there’s a spy among

my people.”

Xiang Shaolong nodded, “Master Tao must have kept the route you’re taking to Handan very secret, not many will know about it. So if Hui Hu knows that you will be passing by Dashi Valley, there must be a spy who supplied him with this news.”

Tao Fang was extremely surprised at his quick wit and complimented him, “I was right about you. Not only are you good looking, but intelligent and brave as well. Good! As long as I am still in power, I will not treat you badly.”

Xiang Shaolong laughed to himself, it’ll be more like it if Emperor Qin said these words to him.

Tao Fang hesitated for a moment before saying, “The spy must be Dou Liang. There’s two reason why I’m so sure it’s him. Firstly he excused himself from the group for two days, so he must have met up with Hui Hu. Secondly, out of the few who knows our route, he’s the only one from Wei, and people from Wei cannot be trusted.”

Xiang Shaolong was perplexed, “Since the Weis cannot be trusted, then why did you employ him?”

Tao Fang replied, “Shaolong, you have been living in the mountains, naturally you’re not familiar with the situation in central plains.”

Xiang Shaolong replied earnestly, “I really want to know!”

Tao Fang explained, “We have to start the story from the partitioning of Jin into 3 states, that was the beginning of the division of the whole era. It was said that the powerless King of Zhou isolated the states and after the split, Wei, Han and our Zhao kingdoms were forged and no one paid any heed to Zhou. If the past can be described as a peaceful stream, now it’s a torrential river. The change within the last ten years almost equals the change that has happened over the last 100 years. Those who are incapable will be ousted.” And he can’t help but sigh as he spoke.

Xiang Shaolong cannot imagine that a horse trader like him would be so knowledgeable, and felt the urge to tell him that no matter how they struggle or fight, Emperor Qin would be the one who unite the world in future. But of course he can’t say it out loud, and even if he did, no one would believe him. So he tried to get some information, “Is Qin the strongest and biggest state now?”

Tao Fang looked at him in surprise and said slowly, “Ever since Qin used the reformative policies suggested by Gongsun Yang*, from the Wei ruling family, they’ve indeed become stronger and wealthier. They even destroyed Zhou 5 years ago but also incurred the wrath of the everyone else. Therefore after our state’s great general Le Cheng, Yan She defeated Qin’s army badly and 3 years ago Wei invaded and captured Tao Ju, Qin’s most important city in the east, their strength was greatly diminished.” He was obviously still concerned about the matter of the spy and was not in the mood for further discussion so he said, “Shaolong! I want you to kill that spy Dou Liang for me.”

Xiang Shaolong patted his chest and said, “Leave this to me, but if the wrong person was killed, won’t the enemy be even happier.”

Tao Fang smiled coldly, “You’re new here, Dou Liang have not figured out your background. You could test him with words, I’m sure he’ll fall into the trap.”

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought that he’s smart, and nodded his head in agreement.

Tao Fang’s attitude to him changed totally and said, “Anyone from Wei can be killed. It’s only recently that I found out that he’s from Wei, and have decided to stop using him after the completion of this task, but I did not expect him to strike first.” He took out an exquisite sheathed dagger and handed it to Xiang Shaolong, saying, “Make it a clean job, after this I’ll tell others that I sent him somewhere else on a mission. This dagger is made by a famed blacksmith specializing in making swords in Yue, and can easily cut a strand of flying hair. I’ll give this to you, let it drink it’s fill of that Wei thief’s blood.”

Xiang Shaolong saw that he spoke of murder like an everyday affair and was secretly startled. However, all the training he received taught him how to kill, so as long as it’s the bad guys he’s killing, he won’t feel too sad about it.

Tao Fang was suddenly in the mood to chat again and said, “The Weis occupied our capital Handan for 2 years, and thankfully the State of Qi helped us force the Weis to retreat. But a lot of Weis were still left in Handan, and they became traitors and spies. That is what Dou Liang is, so you must not have any sympathy when you strike.”

Xiang Shaolong went back to camp. All the other warriors were respectful

towards him and now that the sun is setting, the land started getting darker.

From a corner of the camp sounds of girls laughing could be heard. In any case, Xiang Shaolong had to find Dou Liang, so he might as well walk over and take a look, and was immediately stunned. It turns out that the small river was filled with naked girls, all bathing and having fun in the water.

My god! Why are ancient women even bolder than the western ladies in Caen or Miami Beach?

A few warriors were at the side of the river enjoying this marvelous scenery, and one of them was Li Shan. He walked forward with a smile and said, "The quality of this batch of girls is very good, does Brother Xiang want to ask Master Tao for two to have some fun? He seems very impressed with you?"

Xiang Shaolong asked in bewilderment, "Where did you find so many pretty women? Don't they feel that it's very sad to be traded like goods?"

Li Shan asked curiously, "Isn't Brother Xiang from the mountains? If women aren't goods then what are they? If they were sold to some poor village or isolated place, they would have to serve the whole family of 10 odd men alone, isn't that worse? Now they can go to the city, and if they're lucky, they may capture the eyes of someone from a wealthy family. They'll be able to wear jewelry, how much more proud can they be!"

Xiang Shaolong may be lecherous, but he's always respected women so he finds it difficult to accept such an attitude. Therefore he can only stop talking about this subject and instead asked, "Where is Dou Liang?"

Li Shan smiled evilly, “Just because he’s the head here, he chose the prettiest girl and went into the tent, what do you think he’s going to do?” Xiang Shaolong was secretly furious and after finding out where his tent is, walked towards it.

Before he reached the tent, he could hear a man panting and a woman moaning.

Xiang Shaolong guessed that he will certainly emerge for dinner so he waited at the side. Indeed, after a while, the girl came out first with her clothes in disarray, followed by Dou Liang.

Xiang Shaolong walked towards him and as he walked past, said quietly, “Come alone with me if you have the guts.”

Dou Liang laughed sinisterly and followed him out of the camp.

They came to a dense forest and Xiang Shaolong turned around, taking the opportunity to hide the dagger behind his back and said respectfully, “Brother Dou, I am sent here by Hui Hu to help you.”

Dou Liang’s hand was already on his sword but once he heard that, he looked at him in extreme shock.

Xiang Shaolong was laughing secretly to himself and said, “There’s been a change in plans, Hui Hu has decided not to strike at Dashi Valley, and told me to inform Brother Dou.”

Once Dou Liang heard him mention the name Dashi Valley, he was finally hooked and said furiously, “What the heck is Hui Hu trying to do. What other better locations can there be other than Dashi Valley?”

Xiang Shaolong took the opportunity to step forward and said, “It’s at...”

Dou Liang shouted, “Stand there and talk!”

Xiang Shaolong drew out his long sword and threw it aside, saying with a bitter smile, “Brother Dou is too overly suspicious.”

When Dou Liang saw him drawing his sword, he drew his in retaliation as well but when he saw him throwing it aside, he was relieved and replaced his sword back into the sheath. His expression calmed a little and he said, “That old fox Tao Fang is quite formidable, how can I not be careful.”

Xiang Shaolong suddenly stared at a spot behind him, his expression full of fear.

Naturally Dou Liang would turn his head back for a look and when he saw no one, he knows he has fallen for the trap. He felt a coldness on the side of his neck, stabbed by Xiang Shaolong’s dagger, fresh blood flowing out from the vein and he died on the spot.

Xiang Shaolong walked over to his body and sighed, “When it comes to killing, who can be better than me, who is from the Special Task Force and well versed in anatomy?”

Xiang Shaolong returned to camp and other than the warriors on patrol, everyone else were gathered at the open area in the middle of the camp. There were 20 over tables, the girls taking 10 tables, and there was a campfire banquet. There was a wide array of food, and maybe because of this, the women were willing to become goods.

He walked towards Tao Fang, sat next to him and lifted 2 fingers in a sign of victory, to indicate he has taken care of Dou Liang.

Naturally Tao Fang did not understand his signal, but looking at his spirited expression, he knows that he has succeeded. He was secretly complimenting him, thinking that this lad has killed a man and yet there's no change in his expression, he's indeed a first rate assassin and killer. He said, "Shaolong, go and take a look at the ladies' table, if there's anyone to your liking, just take a few into the tent for fun, no need to be shy."

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought to himself, now why would he be shy. It's just that my body is not made of iron after all, after dealing with that insatiable Baiyi wanton, he has no more energy to enjoy another woman, much less a few. He spoke into Tao Fang's ear, "Is Master Tao interested in making a night journey, so that the enemy's spy will suddenly realize tomorrow morning that he's lost our whole camp?"

That night Tao Fang ordered his men to cover the horses hooves and the wheels of the carriages with soft cloth. Leaving behind a few empty tents and some straw men, they journeyed in the dark of the night until dawn before they pitched camp and rested hidden away in a small valley.

Xiang Shaolong slept soundly in his private tent, now he has become the head of the bodyguards.

When he woke up he realized that there's a pretty lady in his tent.

The beauty knelt on the floor, her forehead touching the ground and said respectfully, "I am Ting Fangshi, and have been ordered by Master Tao to serve Master Xiang on this journey."

Xiang Shaolong was secretly commending Tao Fang for his kind thoughts. He might as well enjoy the feeling of being a master, so he said, "Sit up!"

Ting Fangshi sat up straight, her voluptuous bosom straining to escape from her clothes.

Xiang Shaolong took a while to shift his gaze back upwards, and immediately recognized her as the beauty Dou Liang took into his tent yesterday. He remembered her tender moans and immediately felt desire, secretly hating Dou Liang for being able to pick a fine specimen. He sat up with a smile, reached out and pinched her face and said gently, "Who can bear to sell you?"

Ting Fangshi lowered her head and said quietly, "It's my husband!"

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, "What? How can there be such a man who does not know how to treasure a woman?"

Ting Fangshi guffawed, covered her little mouth and said, "Master Xiang talks

so funnily, you're different from the others."

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, of course it's different, we're from a different time period! However he asked, "Is he inept?"

Ting Fangshi asked in alarm, "What is 'inept'?"

Xiang Shaolong explained patiently, "It means a man who is incapable of copulating with a woman."

Ting Fangshi finally understood and she shook her head, "That's not the problem, but because he already had over 10 wives, and all of them snubbed me and backstabbed me, saying that I was flirting with other men with my eyes. So he sold me."

Xiang Shaolong was suddenly enlightened, and felt that beauties truly have a hard life. Because her beauty has incurred the jealousy of the other evil wives. So he asked nonchalantly, "So did you flirt with other men?"

Ting Fangshi gritted her teeth and said, "Not initially, but I did later. Because I had hoped that a stronger man than him will come and save me. As long as I can get him and his wives out of my sight, I am willing to make any sacrifice."

She then chuckled and said, "Master Xiang is different from other men. They can't wait to take off their clothes and jump onto me once they see me, only Master Xiang will talk to me like this. I am very grateful."

Xiang Shaolong felt a sense of pity, the women of this era really have hard

lives, like a rootless duckweed, their fate totally controlled by men. His enthusiasm was dampened, the fire of desire he felt early disappeared totally. He stood up and said, "I think there's a clear stream towards the east, I'd like to go there for a cold bath."

Ting Fangshi did not really understand what he said, so after he explained again, she hurriedly stood up and said, "Let me serve Master Xiang with your bath." She then added quietly, "That would be my greatest honor."

The two of them stood naked in the waist high stream, with Fang Tingshi helping to scrub him. Xiang Shaolong was so comfortable he almost wanted to sigh.

Her pretty face blushed and her eyes shone, appreciating his strong muscles, and she can't help but move her slender hands from the back to the front, gently caressing his chest which is wider than an average man.

This is the first time she has seen such an endearing handsome man, and can't help but feel desire.

Xiang Shaolong was totally drunk on the feeling of unhindered contact with this beauty, feeling her generous bosom rubbing against his back and remembered how her chest looked like as it was straining tightly in her clothes and felt his desire rising again.

Suddenly he heard Tao Fang's voice on the shore, "If Shaolong is satisfied with this woman, then let her follow you in future."

Ting Fangshi exclaimed, "Ah!", her expression overjoyed. If she can become this man's mistress or maid, she'd be willing even if it means death.

Xiang Shaolong obviously knows that this is Tao Fang's way of bribing him, so after thanking him, asked, "Have the scout returned with any news?"

Tao Fang's eyes settled on Ting Fangshi's peaks, which was trembling slightly. When he bought this woman, he inspected her body personally so he knows how smooth and supple her skin is, so now he felt something. He swallowed his saliva and said, "Shaolong has guessed correctly, there's 3 thieves running after us but they've been killed. We have lost Hui Hu for the time being but we must not let our guard down. The horse thieves are good at tracking, and added with our slow speed, they will catch up sooner or later."

During his life in the army, Xiang Shaolong has long become accustomed to bathing together with his teammates, so he's not uncomfortable at all that Tao Fang is seeing him. However, for Ting Fangshi to be admired by him thus, he felt a little taken advantaged of, so he said "We'll leave immediately after the meal and see how far we can travel. Give me 10 odd men, I will hide the tracks of the horses and carriages." Tao Fang is getting more and more confident of him, so he nodded and said, "We'll depend on you, enjoy yourself!" and left.

Ting Fangshi turned towards him and said while hugging him, "Master Xiang! I will be yours in future."

How can Xiang Shaolong withstand the sight of her alluring body, so he carried her up and kissed her lips hardly and invaded her body.

It's the first time Ting Fangshi enjoyed such tenderness from a man, so she used all her might to express her willingness and joy.

Familiar moans and groans sounded in Xiang Shaolong's ears again like music from the heavens.

Xiang Shaolong showed all his moves gently, and let this beauty who has suffered in the hands of men enjoy a sweetness that she can never imagined.

Chapter 5

Display of invincibility

As far as they can see all around them, the land was a large lush plain of green, peppered with wild forests and winding rivers and streams. Nature is so breathtakingly beautiful.

Tao Fang suddenly sighed and said, “I’m in conflict when it comes to the Weis as well. The southwest of Great Jin has a corner separated by the Yellow River, followed by treacherous mountains. It effectively sandwiched the Qin’s only entrance in the east. After the separation of the 3 states, this section was taken by the Weis, and as long as they remain strong, the Qins will be trapped in the west and cannot conquer towards the east. Hai! So do we wish for the state of Wei to be strong or weak?”

Xiang Shaolong asked, “Why does Master Tai hate the Weis so much?”

Tao Fang’s expression turned somber and he said, “Ever since Marquis Wen of Wei reformed Wei, he kept invading others, not only weakening us, but made the Qins stronger and become a danger to us. The chaotic situation now is all the result of the Wei’s actions. Secondary are the aberrant Qis who goes back on their words. When we joined forced with Chu and Han to attack Qin, they came to attack us and gave Qin the opportunity to eliminate the 2 states of Ba and Shu, thus expanding their land. All of them are short sighted people.”

Another warrior interrupted, “But the most idiotic would be King Chu. The Qins used only 600 miles of land to entice him to break off friendly ties with Qi. In the end they were left isolated and without reinforcements. The Qins defeated them badly at Danyang and they lost 80,000 men, Hanzhong, northwest of Chengdu and Pingxiao which resulted in a huge setback for their state. Later he was lured by the Qins to go to Wu Pass and was captured by them. In the end he died of an illness in a foreign land. One does not know whether to pity him or laugh at him.”

Xiang Shaolong got excited upon hearing all these. In the 21st century there’s no turmoil like this where the outcome can be determined by war. Only here can he show off his capabilities like a fish to water. By now he is thinking less and less about returning.

After the few of them discussed about their strategies at Shantou, they split up to follow up on their respective tasks.

Xiang Shaolong led 30 odd men and set traps and dug holes on the surrounding slopes to prevent the enemy from attacking them in the cover of the night. He also confirmed the emergency back up plans with Tao Fang, who nodded with consent as he listened.

During these few days, Xiang Shaolong would practice on his swordplay and archery whenever he is free. He had learnt all these in the past, but of course such skills were not as important as practicing their marksmanship at that time, so now he has to work harder in these areas.

To a full time army personnel like him, he is more adept at using weapons

then anyone else. However he humbly sought advice from other warriors and improved on their swordplay, creating for himself a powerful yet unconstrained style of swordplay that is most lethal. Although he felt that it's still not good enough, but he can't find a good teacher in such a short time, so he'll have to make do with it.

He only returned to the camp to rest late at night.

The beautiful and coquettish Ting Fangshi, who has been nourished by love, had just woken up and was about to change his attire for him when Xiang Shaolong stopped her and said, "I'll sleep in this tonight! I have a feeling the thieves will come tonight."

Ting Fangshi was so startled her face turned pale and she stammered, "What should we do then. If I end up in the hands of those horse thieves, I will surely be defiled, and face a fate worse than death."

Xiang Shaolong hugged and assured her, "Don't be afraid, with Xiang Shaolong around, I will guarantee your safety, I may stay behind to fight off the enemy, you'll go with Master Tao to Handan first and I'll meet up with you later."

Ting Fangshi's expression turned stricken and she sobbed, "I ask that Heaven have pity on me and protect Master Xiang. In the past I felt that it doesn't matter which man I follow. But now I know that if I don't have Master Xiang, I would not want to live a single day longer.

Xiang Shaolong knows that this enticing beauty has developed feelings for

him and suddenly felt desire again. He licked the tears off her face, his other hand reaching into her top and working its way around her bosom. For a moment he remembered Mei Canniang, and secretly thought that it was a good idea not to let her come along, or else she might have been frightened to death now.

Ting Fangshi's petite body shivered, her face red and burning, fire coming out of her eyes. Her little mouth gaped open, sighing and moaning, the expression of desire on her face thoroughly enticing.

Xiang Shaolong suddenly stopped, and said "I have to conserve my energy tonight to deal with any situation that might arise. Can you wait for a night?"

Ting Fangshi gasped and moaned, she has no choice but to nod her head in agreement. But once he saw her rapidly heaving bosom, he knows that she is now in a heat of desire that cannot be extinguished.

For the first time, Xiang Shaolong thought that how idyllic life will be if there's no war.

Ting Fangshi blew out the oil lamp and fell into this man's arms, making him out of control.

Xiang Shaolong hugged a ball of fire and snuggled into the blankets. He asked gently, "I forgot to ask you, have you ever had an affair with another man behind your husband's back?"

Ting Fangshi curled up and nibbling his ear, said softly, "He was very strict

with me, but I frequently have to accompany the men he singled out. When he's happy, he'll let his relatives and friends have fun with me. Luckily it's a lot better serving other men than serving him."

Xiang Shaolong secretly sighed to himself, women in this era has no standing at all, but just the slaves of men. From what she said, a married woman is not that much different from a prostitute. When he thought of the Emperor Qin in the movie, his mother was the favorite concubine of Lu Buwei, who offered her to his father, and no longer felt that such a situation is strange.

Under extreme exhaustion, he slept.

He suddenly woke up, and heard urgent footsteps coming nearer and nearer. Ting Fangshi was frightened awake.

Xiang Shaolong ordered her to stay in the tent and quietly took his sword and left the tent. He met a nervous looking Li Shan and knew that something's wrong so he hurriedly followed him to the top of the eastern hill.

Tao Fang and all his warriors are all awake, crouching at the top of the hill looking at their surroundings.

Under the majestic stars, in the seemingly quiet plains, birds were startled into flight, and there were roars from ferocious tigers.

Tao Fang turned pale and exclaimed, "They're coming!"

Xiang Shaolong is adept at observing his enemy's movements, and guessed

that their enemy is still far away and have not grouped up in force. He suggested, "Why don't Master Tao escape with the women first, but leave the horses here. I will lead 50 men to engage the enemy and we will meet in Handan at a later date."

Tao Fang knows that the horse thieves outnumber them and they're all vicious and fearless, and felt a chill in his heart. He reached out and grabbing his shoulders, said with gratitude, "I'll leave everything to you. You must keep your life and come to Handan to look for me. I will take good care of Ting Fangshi for you." And he left in a hurry after speaking these words.

After a moment, Tao Fang and the women went up the horse carriage and under the protection of the other 60 odd warriors, left by the other passage that has not been laid with traps.

Xiang Shaolong and the rest immediately busied themselves, improving their defenses, increasing the depth of the trap holes, putting more ropes to trip the horses and such.

3 hours later, the horse thieves finally came. The horses on the hills neighed as the thieves surrounded the small hill. Murderous horse thieves were all around them, causing a chill down the various warriors' heart, because they are really greatly outnumbered.

Xiang Shaolong felt himself getting numb and kept reminding himself to calm down.

Suddenly footsteps were heard, 2 teams of 100 odd horse thieves ran up the

hill from the east and west.

Xiang Shaolong knows that the other party is just testing them, so he instructed everyone to stand by their positions and not make any rash moves.

The 2 teams of horse thieves started making their way up, whooping shrilly, and causing anyone who heard them feel a cold shiver.

Halfway up the hill, the horse thieves split up and charged quickly forward.

The horse thieves at the forefront fell over, either falling into the pike holes or their horses tripped over the ropes, causing the men and horses to roll down the hill and knock into the charging horse thieves behind. Under this chain reaction, more than half of the 2 teams of almost 200 men were either dead or injured.

The warriors cheered, their confidence greatly boosted.

Xiang Shaolong secretly thanked the good luck, knowing that the enemy lost because they were careless and over confident, that's why they fell into the trap. He hurriedly ordered everyone to move to the bottom of the slope and hide in the holes without the pikes and prepare their arrows to launch a third attack to the enemy.

A few hundred torches lighted up the surrounding area, throwing the whole hill into fiery brightness.

A burly man with huge graying beard walked out from among their enemy, sitting proudly on a horse. He pointed and shouted, “Those damned Zhao devils. If I, Hu Hui, allow anyone of you to die with an intact body, then I will retire immediately.”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly berating the other party for being stupid. Once he said that, won't he be forcing his opponents to fight with all their might?

Xiang Shaolong felt that his arm is stronger than others, and shot an arrow towards Hui Hu. The light weighted arrow lost its momentum before it even reached its target and dropped about 10 meters away from Hui Hu. However, this is enough to cause apprehension among the horse thieves. Who has such incredible arm strength?

The warriors were secretly cheering, but none dared to make any noise, afraid that the enemy will find out their location.

The horn blew and the horse thieves all came down their horses and split into two groups to attack from all sides.

Horse thieves with shields and spears, who under the light of the torch, made their way carefully up the slope, led the first wave of attack, spoiling the trap that Xiang Shaolong had laid.

Behind them were archers, who kept shooting arrows towards the hill, covering the ascent of the men with spears. However they did not know that Xiang Shaolong is already hiding in the middle of the hill in a hole designed to avoid arrows.

By now all the warriors were impressed with Xiang Shaolong's prediction of the enemy's moves and their confidence soared.

By Xiang Shaolong's estimation, the enemy still has about 700 men who can fight. Even if they can get rid of the 400 odd men who are making their way up now, their enemy still outnumbers them greatly. Besides, there's no way they can kill all the troops who are advancing now without causing casualties to their own people. He had an idea, and instructed Li Shan, who was by his side, "When the fight starts later, bring 10 men to the horse enclosure immediately. When you hear the signal of 3 long and 3 short horns, break the enclosure immediately and let the horses out. Let them charge down from the east, then we'll escape from the west."

Li Shan immediately agreed and went to look for his partners.

By now the first batch of horse thieves have reached the midsection of the hill, slowly coming closer. The atmosphere was tense.

Hui Hu and the remaining of his 300 men sat on their horses at the east side arranging their formation. They rubbed their fists and palms, getting ready to charge up and kill.

This is the first time Xiang Shaolong is in such a situation, and his heart beat wildly for a moment. He ordered, "Release the rocks!"

The barrier of 10 odd piles of tree trunks and rocks, which were hidden behind the bushes and grass, was removed and they rolled down like waves, breaking the enemy's shields and causing them to fall.

Xiang Shaolong shouted, "Release the arrows." All the warriors who were hidden in the burrows immediately showed themselves and their arrows fell like rain. The enemy was in chaos and could not retaliate at all. They were struck by arrows and rolled down the hill, suffering another 200 odd casualties.

The morale of the warriors were greatly boosted and they cheered.

Hui Hu was jumping mad and after retreating the injured men, he immediately regrouped his men for the third attack.

Xiang Shaolong observed how the other party was moving and knew that they're putting their main force on the slope at the east. That area is not as steep and secretly thanking heaven for helping him, he ordered all the warriors to retreat up the hill.

There are advantages to having less men, the enemy will not be able to detect their movements so easily.

When they have all retreated up the hill, Xiang Shaolong told them to lead their horses and told them his plan. When the warriors heard that they can escape, their morale were boosted and they were all united, with no one making any objection. Until now, none of their men has been injured so naturally they think of Xiang Shaolong like a deity now.

The horn sounded, the horse thieves charged up again from all areas but most of the remaining 500 off horse thieves were coming up from the east.

Xiang Shaolong waited until the horse thieves were halfway up the hill before he ordered his man to sound the signal. Horses neighed and hooves drummed, a hundred odd wild horses were chased out of the enclosure and the warriors all hurriedly helped to steer the horses so that they ran madly down the eastern slope. They even used their long spears to poke the horses buttocks so that they will become even wilder. Amidst the flying sand, the wild horses galloped down the slope, directly into the horse thieves who were on their way up.

Xiang Shaolong has no time to observe the outcome and leading his 50 warriors, ran towards the western slope, running all the way down the safe path.

Only a hundred odd horse thieves met them, and because they were unprepared, they were quickly defeated.

Xiang Shaolong knows that his plan must be beyond the expectations of the enemy. Hui Hu does not know that all the women have been sent away, so he couldn't have imagined that only 51 riders were left to charge out of the siege.

The eastern slope may be in chaos, but the horse thieves from the other 2 sides all came to help and for a moment, the sounds of killing filled the air.

Although Xiang Shaolong had learnt to ride in the army, but he's naturally not as adept as the warriors and horse thieves who grew up on horseback. When they reached the foot of the hill, he's already lagging behind the other warriors, who thought that he is so brave as to risk his own life to cover their

retreat.

By now only about 30 out of the 50 warriors remained, and they hurriedly escaped.

With his amazing arm strength, Xiang Shaolong killed a few horse thieves who were pursuing him with his spear. He was about to catch up with his team when he felt a sharp pain on his shoulder, shot by an arrow.

Xiang Shaolong roared and urged his horse to run faster. In his haste he did not see where he is going at all, but only knows he must move forward quickly. In a short moment, he was all alone, riding forward in the vast plains.

The horse suddenly lost its footing and threw him off. He stumbled into the bushes and even the end of the arrow was snapped. The horse finally collapsed and died of exhaustion.

Xiang Shaolong felt his body getting weak and his head giddy, with a fiery pain behind his shoulder. His body was stained with fresh blood from the wound. He gritted his teeth and stood up. Taking the dagger Tao Fang gave him, he endured the extreme pain and cut out the flesh surrounding the arrowhead, and after that haphazardly bandaged the wound with his shirt.

He was parched, and knew that this is an indication of losing too much blood so he climbed up with much pain.

A ray of light shone from the eastern side of the plains. They have ran the whole night, no wonder the horse could not take it any more. He looked at

the horse in apology and continued on his way.

He walked for 20 odd days in the deserted wilderness. Xiang Shaolong experienced the most difficult journey in his whole life.

The first few days he depended on wild fruits to stave his hunger. Later when his wound gradually healed after he applied mashed herbs on it to prevent infection and inflammation, his strength returned and he hunted wild rabbits for food. He was disheveled and dirty with tattered clothes.

Following Tao Fang's instructions, looking at the sun during the day and checking out the stars at night, he walked towards the direction of Handan. One day he came to the bottom of a huge mountain and looking at the tall and dangerous looking cliff, he had no choice but to walk around it. But he walked for more than 10 days and yet he was still walking around the winding mountain area. By the time he left the mountainous area, he was totally exhausted. Even his sword was broken and just as he was despairing, he found an official road outside the forest. He was overjoyed and bounded towards the road. By this time even his boots were torn.

On the way he met two groups of traders with a dozen men but when they saw his bedraggled look, they hurriedly moved away, totally ignoring him.

Xiang Shaolong sighed about the heartlessness of men. After walking for three more days, he reached another large city in the state of Zhao, Wu An, which is west of Handan.

By this time, the weather will turn cold at night, so cold that he'll be

shivering. He wanted to go into the city but was chased out by the Zhao soldiers. He realized that all who enters the city must pay taxes and have their identities checked. The way he looked, like a beggar now, not to mention that he is penniless, there's no way he can enter the city.

Never did Xiang Shaolong imagine that he would become a pest that no one wants. Luckily he has been through rigorous military training and was especially resilient. He did not give up but waited for a chance outside the city gates.

He decided that after gaining into the city, he have to get clothes, food and a horse even if he has to steal or swindle. And after he finds out the route to Handan, he'll go there immediately to look for Tao Fang so that he can end this painful existence.

That night he ate wild fruits to appease his hunger, huddled up in the forest next to the road, tolerating the biting cold night.

When the sun shone on him as the day broke, he finally fell asleep.

Without knowing how long he slept, he was suddenly jarred awake by the sound of carriage wheels.

He opened his eyes for a look, and it turned out to be a group who was carting sheep. He was ecstatic and when no one was noticing, he hid himself in the last sheep cart amongst the sheep and stole into the city.

This city of the State of Zhao during the Warring States Period has a lot of

elderly with tall and large buildings. The place was crowded, but it seems that there are more females to makes. Xiang Shaolong thought to himself that this must be the after effect of Changping where the Qin generals killed 400,000 Zhao soldiers.

He was wondering if they have gigolos here, if there is, with his ability, he'll be able to make the ladies happy. He can then earn enough for traveling expenses, a good horse and fresh clothes to Handan.

Once he thought about this, he himself felt that it's hilarious, and jumped off the cart.

Once the people on the street saw him, they all gave him despising looks. Xiang Shaolong touched the beard on his face and almost wanted to cry. Before he came into the city, he had a purpose, which is to figure out how to come into the city. But now that he's really in the city, he is at a loss instead.

He felt ashamed of himself and turned into a deserted lane, but was discovered by a group of children who were playing in the courtyard. They ran after him and made fun of him as if he's a monster, and were so mischievous they even threw stones at him.

When he turned around to scare them, the dozen or so children immediately scattered. One little girl could not run away in time and fell down. When Xiang Shaolong wanted to help her up, the little girl was so panicked that she wailed loudly. Immediately a few adults holding knives, spears, rods etc ran towards him with cries of murder.

Chapter 6

Leader of the Mohist School

Xiang Shaolong did not want to fight them, so he can only run away. He later ended up at a dilapidated and isolated temple, walked in there and sat cross legged, hidden in a corner.

What should he do? Why don't he go back to Mulberry Forest Village and look for Mei Canniang and live the rest of his life there. Once he thought of this, he really felt that heroes are short-lived.

Suddenly, there was someone else in the temple.

Xiang Shaolong looked over in surprise. It turns out to be a middle-aged man wearing linen clothes, his feet bare. No wonder he did not hear any footsteps.

That man was tall and well built, almost as tall as him, his features plain, his expression calm. However his eyes were alert, and besides the cloth he bun his hair with, he wore no other accessories, looking a little like a monk on a pilgrimage.

The two of them eyed each other.

The man suddenly came towards Xiang Shaolong, squat down and asked, "Where did Brother come from?"

Xiang Shaolong did not know what the other party has on his mind, so he said, “I was on my way to Handan to visit my relatives but lost my way and ended up here. If Sir can tell me how to get to Handan, I’ll be very grateful.” By now his accent and speech is about 70 to 80 percent similarity to how the people at that time talked.

The man smiled and said, “I’m not a sir, it’s just that I saw that you’re strongly built and good looking but although you ended up in such a state, you still have pride in your eyes, that’s why I asked out of curiosity. Tell me, what are you good at?”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly cursing, but he has to find out the route to Handan so he swallowed his anger and replied, “I don’t know anything, but I have brute strength. I’m not afraid of hard work or fighting.”

That man smiled, “Do you know how to use a sword?”

Of course Xiang Shaolong nodded his head.

The man said calmly, “Come with me!” He pushed open the back door of the temple and walked in.

In any case, Xiang Shaolong has no place to stay now, so he followed him in. Behind the door there’s a world of it’s own. It’s an abandoned courtyard with high walls surrounding the four sides with a dried up pond in the middle. On the other end is a small stone house.

That man walked out of the house with two wooden swords and threw one

of them to Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong was shocked when he caught hold of the sword. It's actually a few times heavier than his previous sword, the wood was black, and he wondered what kind of tree it is made from.

That man saw his look of surprise and said, "This is a heavy sword made from a 1000 year old pomegranate tree. Fine! Show me some attacks."

Xiang Shaolong waved the sword a little, shook his head and said, "No! I'm afraid I'll hurt you."

A look of appreciation shot through the man's eyes and he smiled, "If your sword can touch my clothes, I'll give you a detailed map to Handan as well as traveling expenses and clothes immediately."

Xiang Shaolong was shocked when he heard that and quietly thought that this person is even more conceited than him. He laughed and said, "In that case I'll oblige." He went forward and was 5 steps away from the person when he made a fake move. He leaned towards the left, then moved to the right, his sword sweeping over, force meeting force, using the strength in his arms to shake his opponent's wooden sword away.

Who would have expected that that person did not move at all, but just moved his wrist. Although he struck later, his sword reached his opponent first and slashed diagonally at his sword, then the tip of the sword slid forward as if it's going to stab Xiang Shaolong's face.

Xiang Shaolong was startled and took a step back. His opponent's wondrous swordplay made it difficult for him to use his strength. He felt piqued and with a roar, leapt forward like a ferocious tiger. Continuously for 7 moves, his danced madly with his sword like leaves falling on a strong, windy night, suddenly attacking the top or bottom, sweeping and chopping, attacking towards him.

The corner of the man's lips seem to curve up in a smile and yet he did not move, but no matter how he slashed, his opponent would just be able to block off his sword. His following sword moves were able to force him back, and there's no need for him to fight with him on strength. Although he only defended and did not attack, there's no way he can get close.

"Pak Pak" the sound kept ringing in his ears.

When he was striking for the 72th time, Xiang Shaolong was finally exhausted. He stepped back and panted, looking at this gentleman in front of him incredulously.

That man exclaimed in surprise, "So you really do not know the art of swordplay, but only depended on your strength and nimbleness. But if an average swordsman was to meet you, he'll surely have difficulty fighting you."

Xiang Shaolong gave him back the sword dejectedly, and admitted his loss, "I admit I can't be compared to you. Hai! To think that I actually harbored the wish to roam the world. It turns out that a real swordsman can be so formidable. Farewell! I'll return to the mountains now and just live out the

rest of my life.” When he finished his words, he really felt completely discouraged and thought about the era he is so familiar with. If they’re dueling on marksmanship, he’ll definitely be able to win this swordsman.

That man laughed, “From the way Brother moves and talks, you’re poor but yet you’re not and your bearing is excellent. Obviously you’re an upright and extraordinary person. Come! Have a bath and change into some clean clothes. I’ll cook and we can have a good chat.”

After eating 2 bowls of rice, Xiang Shaolong’s spirit was restored.

The man saw that after he has shaved, combed his hair and changed into linen clothes, Xiang Shaolong seemed to have changed into another person and his eyes revealed a look of admiration. He said smoothly, “Just now Brother said you wanted to make a name for yourself, I wonder what kind of name are you looking for?”

Xiang Shaolong was stunned for a moment, and replied with a little embarrassment, “I’m actually not too sure, but just taking things as they come. Now that I have clothes, I’m thinking of changing this dagger for some money, and it’ll be best if I can buy a horse to bring me to Handan.”

That man furrowed his brow and said, “A man in society all alone, how can he not have goals or aspirations. Only those who create opportunities are true heroes.”

Xiang Shaolong was irked and asked, “What aspirations do you have then?”

That man smiled condescendingly and replied, “Very simple, which is to eliminate ‘the greatest bane to the world’, and to accomplish ‘the greatest benefit to the world’.”

Xiang Shaolong guffawed, “These sentences are so vague, what can be considered the greatest benefit and the greatest bane to the world?”

The man was not offended and said calmly, “The greatest bane of the world, is like the strong preying on the weak, big states conquering small states, the intelligent suppressing the foolish. And the root to all these problems, is because there’s not enough love between people. If we can all love one another, hand over our possessions, then we can all share the wealth. There’ll no longer be fights over jealousy, and accomplish the greatest benefit to the world.”

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed hoarsely, “So you’re a believer of Mohism.”

That man was baffled, “What Mohism?”

Xiang Shaolong asked excitedly, “Is your grand-teacher Mo Zhai, his teachings are very famous, on the same standing as the Confucianism, Taoism and Legalism and it’ll be passed on forever!”

That person was totally perplexed, but since he knows the name Mo Zhai, obviously he wasn’t talking nonsense, so he nodded and said, “Mo Zhai is indeed our first Juzi, are you really from the villages?”

Xiang Shaolong asked, “What is Juzi, that I do not know.”

That man thought for a while and explained, “Juzi is the leader of the ‘Mohist Unit’. When we first started, we hoped to stop fights with fights, but we will only defend and not attack. A pity that the unit now has evolved greatly, and has split into 3 units, named after the place they are in, which is Qi Mo, Chu Mo and Zhao Mo. I am the previous Juzi, Meng Sheng’s disciple and the purpose of my journey is to unify the 3 units again and fight for our dreams.”

Xiang Shaolong asked solemnly, “Why are you telling me such a big secret?”

That man sighed and said, “Because I have the Juzi Token, so I thought it’ll be an easy task to reunite the groups. But I did not expect that when I found the leader of Zhao Mo in Handan, he’d actually send his men to kill me. Therefore I escaped to this place and felt that a single person will be weak and helpless, so I must gather all my men before I can have a chance of unifying the 3 Mo. So how can I lightly let off someone with character and skills like yours.”

Xiang Shaolong kept shaking his hands and said, “No way, I will not spill my blood over such illusionary and hopeless dream that will never come true. Hai! Trust me! The idealism of Mohism will never be fulfilled. Once wealth is equally distributed, you’ll get a lot of useless people instead. There’ll only be improvement if there’s competition.”

That man’s body shook when he heard this, and closed his eyes, deep in thought.

Xiang Shaolong begged quietly, “Why don’t you tell me how to get to Handan. As for giving me clothes and food, I, Xiang Shaolong, will never

forget your kindness.”

That man opened his eyes, a gleam shooting out of it and said with a smile, “Nothing in this world is free. Learn swordplay from me! The day you can defeat the wooden sword in my hand, will be when I’ll accompany you to Handan. If you’re a man, then agree to my request! Or else even if you can reach Handan, but once you meet a real swordsman, you’ll still end up dead.”

Xiang Shaolong thought that it sounded reasonable, and asked with hesitation, “You won’t force me to join your unit, right!”

That man laughed, “Not only will I not force you to join, I can forget about accepting you as my disciple. We’re just friends exchanging pointers on equal standing. My name is Yuan Zong, you can call me Brother Yuan if you like.”

Therefore Xiang Shaolong lived in this temple, waking up before the cock crows to practice swordplay with Yuan Zong, and discussed with him ways to attack and defend.

Even Yuan Zong was impressed with the speed of his improvement and praised him. A month later, he was able to attack and defend in his duels with Yuan Zong.

Yuan Zong will leave the temple every day, leaving Xiang Shaolong, who is now obsessed with swordplay, to practice on his own. At dusk, Yuan Zong would return with food.

Three months passed hurriedly like that.

This day, Yuan Zong returned only at night, his expression somber. He called him into the house and thought for a moment with furrowed brows before he said, “They’ve chased their way here.”

Xiang Shaolong has now forged a deep friendship with him, and asked with concern, “Who is here?”

Yuan Zong sighed, “It’s Zhao Mo’s Yan Ping. I was able to escape only after I injured 18 of his men. What he wants is the Juzi Token I have, because with it, he can conveniently become Juzi.” He paused, then shook his head and said with a bitter smile, “What an irony, even within our own unit we are unable to love everyone, and yet we talk about our ideals.”

Xiang Shaolong does not know how to console him.

Yuan Zong took out a square brass, with a single word ‘Mo’ on it, It looked like a big square seal. He gave this to Xiang Shaolong and said, “Take this token and run towards Handan immediately. I’ve drawn a map for you, and over the past few months I’ve earned enough for your traveling expenses. Leave quickly!”

Chapter 7

Rising Reputation

Xiang Shaolong was extremely touched and he said determinedly, “No! We’ll leave together!”

Yuan Zong smiled slightly and said, “Does Shaolong knows why I wanted to teach you Mohism’s unparalleled swordplay?”

Xiang Shaolong shook his head at a loss.

Yuan Zong explained, “I have traveled the various states and observed the people and in the end I changed my thinking. If we want the world to be at peace, the only way is to eliminate the separation of the states, and let one ruler govern everyone. Only this and a person capable enough to unify the world can fulfill the idealism of Mohism and accomplish the greatest benefit to the world. And this person is you, that’s why I taught you all I know.”

Xiang Shaolong secretly sighed to himself, he knows that indeed there will be one person who will unify the world, and that is Emperor Qin. While he, Xiang Shaolong is just someone who ingratiates powerful people, hoping to find the young Emperor Qin and fight with him so that he can enjoy fame and riches. He secretly felt guilty once he thought of this.

Yuan Zong saw him lowering his head and not talking, and thought that he has been deeply moved. He patted his shoulder and said, “If you’re really

grateful to me, then do as I say! All the men Yan Ping brought are expert swordsmen, and even if there's only a hundred odd of them, the two of us will not be able to handle them. I have tools for climbing the walls, I'll lure them away and you'll take the opportunity to escape. A man must not be hindered by small details if he wants to do something great. If you continue to be wishy-washy, both of us will lose our lives in vain. If the Juzi Token ends up in the hands of evil, I will not die in peace."

Xiang Shaolong reached out and took the Juzi Token, and it felt icy to the touch, obviously it's not made from ordinary brass. No wonder Yan Ping could not make a fake one. He sighed and said, "I really do not know what to say."

Yuan Zong laughed, "There's no need to be so pessimistic, it's not so easy for them to kill me. We may still have a chance to meet in future! There's a pair of shoes in the temple. Since you're not part of our clan, you need not walk barefooted. It'll be terrible if you step onto dog poop or something similar."

Xiang Shaolong can't help but burst out laughing, his tears rolling down his cheeks uncontrollably.

Suddenly a frightening thought crept into his mind.

If the despotic Emperor Qin, Ying Zheng was killed, how would history be changed?

That night Xiang Shaolong scaled past the city walls feeling grief and indignation as he left Wu An, knowing that he will never see Yuan Zong again.

This intelligent man with superb sword skill and lofty aspirations, after witnessing the disintegration of his own sect and how the Mohists became power hungry people, his motivation for saving the world died. He decided to sacrifice himself, hoping that his death can stir up Xiang Shaolong's blood so that he can use another method to fulfill his wish of accomplishing the greatest benefit to the world.

But how can Xiang Shaolong change China's history on his own? He's not Emperor Qin. But can he influence Yin Zheng, like how Yuan Zong influenced him?

Will the change be a bane or bonus to China?

The sun set and the moon rose, the stars changed. Without knowing how many days has passed, he finally reached the heavily guarded walls of the outskirts of Handan.

During this journey, he was totally immersed in the sword play that Yuan Zong taught him, which originated from one of the best master of the time, Mo Zhai. He also included modern society's most horrible assault tactics from somatic psychology and mechanics into the sword play. With such a task at hand, he forgot about time. Sometimes he'll stay more than a dozen days in the wilderness, staving his hunger by hunting wild beasts with the bow and arrows he made.

His physique became even stronger under such harsh conditions.

He had wanted to steal into Handan, but once he saw the tight security, he

has no choice but to walk obediently to the pass and told the guards the great name of Tao Fang's boss, 'King of Livestock' Master Wu.

The guard stood immediately at attention and went to look for an officer to see him.

After the young officer eyed him for a moment, he asked, "What is your name?"

Xiang Shaolong replied truthfully, "I'm Xiang Shaolong."

The expressions on the officer as well as the 10 odd Zhao soldiers surrounding them changed.

The officer barked, "Bold miscreant, how dare you impersonate a hero. He has already perished heroically half a year ago while saving his comrades in the battle with the horse thieves. I have a friend who saw with his own eyes that he blocked the pursuing men on his own."

Xiang Shaolong was shocked, he did not expect that he'd become so famous. He let the Zhao soldiers apprehend him without a struggle, and said with a laugh, "What is the name of your friend?"

The officer said a name, and Xiang Shaolong hurriedly gave a description of that person's looks and build.

By now someone took out from his clothes the dagger Tao Fang gave him. The officer no longer has any doubts once he saw it, and his attitude changed

immediately. After asking what happened that day, and at the same time sent a man to report this matter to Tao Fang, who is in Handan immediately, he personally escorted him to the capital of Zhao.

That officer is called Ning Xin, and as he rode next to him, he said, “Master Wu is one of the most respected men in Handan. If not for him going around buying war horses, and donating to the country’s coffer time to time, I’m afraid our State of Zhao would have been destroyed long ago. Now the Yans have come to attack us, luckily our two great generals Lian Po and Le Cheng eliminated all of them and attacked Yan instead. How fantastic!”

Xiang Shaolong very much wanted to ask why since there are more females to males in Zhao, they still wanted to go all over the place to look for beauties. However, he’s afraid the other party will feel embarrassed and controlled himself from asking the question.

Amidst the talk and laughter, Handan appeared ahead.

Compared to Wu An, Handan is at least 3 to 4 times bigger, the river protecting the city is wide and deep, with tall and thick city walls, and it has the power to withhold ten thousand men with just one man. There were 2 camps of Zhao soldiers outside the city, extending to a fair distance, with a sea of banners, the scene enough to strike fear in anyone. Outside the tower, it was filled with sentries, with their swords drawn and the atmosphere tense.

Before they went into the city, a group of riders rushed out, and the person leading them is Tao Fang, whom he has not seen for a long time. The

remaining were all his comrades who went through life and death with him, with Li Shan being one of them.

When they met, naturally there was surprise all around, and Tao Fang and the warriors went into the city with him happily.

Xiang Shaolong can't help but asked, "Is Ting Fangshi well?"

Tao Fang's expression turned somber, and he said apologetically, "I'm sorry! I thought that Shaolong has died at the hands of those thieves, and after waiting for 3 months, I followed the Master's order and gave her to someone to become a courtesan dancer." He continued with a smile, "But don't you worry, I'll specially choose another 2 beauties who are prettier than her to serve you."

Xiang Shaolong felt as if he was punched in the chest, and he turned pale. It was only a moment later that he was able to ask, "Who was she given to?"

Tao Fang was secretly startled, he did not imagine that such a handsome and flirtatious man like him would actually have feelings for a bought woman. He sighed, "Sorry, I can't tell you, Shaolong..."

Xiang Shaolong said furiously, "Don't say further, if it has not been proven that I'm dead, you should not have given her away."

Tao Fang hid his feelings well, there was no trace of unhappiness at all and said, "Shaolong, go and have a rest and a bath first, I'll help you think of a way. The Master will come and see you personally tomorrow. This is the

greatest honor the warriors in our household can have, so don't miss the opportunity."

Xiang Shaolong's excitement was totally extinguished, and just roamed around the streets like a walking corpse, not interested in the grand buildings surrounding him at all. His mood was at the lowest point.

Without his protection, will this pitiful woman land from the hands of one devil to another?!

Is she being defiled right now by some other men.

Just as he was feeling despondent, Tao Fang gave him a push, telling him to stand to the side with them.

Xiang Shaolong was slightly awoken, and looking up the street, he saw the pedestrians and horse carriages all moving to one side, letting a grand looking horse carriage protected by 20 odd riders move past.

Tao Fang said into his ears, "This is the carriage of King Xiaocheng's sister, Lady Ya. She is a famous beauty in Handan, and married to Zhao Gua but a pity he died in the battle of Chang Ping."

The carriage slowed down, and suddenly stopped in front of them.

Just as everyone was still startled, a soldier rode over and invited Tao Fang over. Tao Fang was surprised and hurriedly came down from his horse and walked over to the lowered carriage curtain. After talking with Lady Ya, the

horse carriage moved away. Tao Fang bowed as he sent them off before returning to his men. He smiled mysteriously at Xiang Shaolong, but did not reveal the contents of their conversation.

Xiang Shaolong reached the guesthouse and stayed in a solitary house. Tao Fang especially sent 4 pretty maids to help him bath and change. That night, he set up a feast with 21 tables at the great hall in the main building of the guesthouse and besides the warriors who fought with him that day, there were Master Wu's other capable assistants as well. There were dances and performances to entertain the guests and the atmosphere was celebratory.

But Xiang Shaolong thought of Ting Fangshi and Mei Canniang whom he has not met for a long time, and remembered the friends and family from his own era whom he may never meet again, and can only drown his sorrow in drinks. He was absolutely drunk and totally concussed even before the feast ended. In his daze, he seems to feel that Ting Fangshi has returned to him, and together they soared among the clouds.

When he woke up, he was lying on the carpet in the bedroom, the sunlight shining in from the window.

Sleeping next to him was a naked beauty, but she's not one of the 4 pretty maids.

There's not a flaw at all on her exquisite face, with distinctive outlines, and unbelievably sweet. She's definitely younger than 18, her black lustrous hair spread onto the blanket, in contrast to her fair skin and ruby lips, and her snow white arms really tugs at one's heart.

The beauty looked like a flower sleeping in spring, there seems to be tears on her pretty face, but she's also filled with the peace and satisfaction after a violent thunderstorm, emanating a soul-capturing brilliance.

Xiang Shaolong secretly exclaimed 'oh my god', what has he done to this young girl who is even prettier than Ting Fangshi and Mei Canniang?

He can't help but quietly lift the blanket higher.

The gleaming hair of youth, a body perfectly proportionate, the beautiful scenery of breathing peaks appeared before his eyes. It seems that there were some remnants of a red stain beneath the tender and smooth long legs with the beautifully rounded buttock.

Xiang Shaolong was shocked and put the blanket back.

The tears on her face must be related to this. He was drunk and muddleheaded last night, and has not touched a woman for almost half a year and actually mistook her for Ting Fangshi and was reckless with her. How can an inexperienced and tender young girl take it, no wonder she cried from the pain. He felt very apologetic, but it's too late now.

Xiang Shaolong stood up and walked to the window and looked out. He saw 2 of the pretty maids watering the plants in the garden and when they saw Xiang Shaolong, they curtsied shyly, yet they can't help stealing glances at his magnificent body.

One of the maids said, "Master is awake, I'll bring you a wash basin and help

you dress up immediately.”

Behind him he heard the soft moan of the beauty who was shocked awake.

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly told the two maids, “Hold on!”

The pretty maid was understanding and she covered her smiling mouth and said, “If Master would like me to serve you, please call me anytime. Heh! My name is Chunying, her name is Xiaying, the other 2 are Qiuying and Dongying. It’s so easy to remember, I guess Master won’t forget!”

Xiang Shaolong was concerned with the beauty behind him, so he smiled and said, “Once I see the two of you, I won’t forget for the rest of my life.” And he turned around.

The beauty whose chastity was just taken by him sat up, the blanket sliding down to her waist, revealing her firm upper body. She lowered her head shyly, not daring to look at his face, and in a sweet and melodious voice said, “Shu’er pays her respects to Master!”

Xiang Shaolong felt sorry for her and sat next to her. He held her petite chin with his hand and lifted her pretty face.

Her large and lively eyes immediately lowered once they came into contact with his gaze, her heart beating like a running deer. The way she looked, shy yet happy, the allure of a young girl, is indeed dazzling to the eyes and takes one’s senses away.

Without hesitation, Xiang Shaolong is sure that she is the most attractive

woman he has ever encountered, and was secretly thinking that Tao Fang is really formidable to give such a pretty girl to him so that he will work for him. He asked gently, "Is it still painful?"

Shu'er shook her head, then she nodded her head shyly, her blushing cheeks immediately spread, until her ears and neck were burning as well.

Xiang Shaolong immediately had the most primitive reaction, and Shu'er's lowered gaze happened to look at it directly and she was so shocked her body shivered, and she stuttered, "Master..."

Xiang Shaolong knows that right now she will certainly be unable to withstand a second storm, so he gently kissed her small lips, lightly nibbling the tip of her tongue, then kissing her eyes and face, followed by her neck and chest. Only when her whole body started trembling did he let her go and said with a smile, "There's no need to be afraid. I was muddleheaded after drinking last night, but I won't be so violent in future. Have a good sleep now!"

Shu'er looked at him invitingly and said breathlessly, "No! Shu'er wants to serve Master."

Xiang Shaolong asked with concern, "Can you stand up?"

Shu'er's slender hand pressed down on his broad shoulder, thinking of using him as support to kneel up first, but her dainty brows rose and she sat back down again, her cheeks burning.

Xiang Shaolong is used to being flirtatious, and on seeing such alluring movements from her, can't help but reach out and fondle her chests before laying her back on the carpet and covering her with the blanket. Just as he was about to leave, Shu'er suddenly pulled his hand.

Xiang Shaolong looked at her in surprise.

Shu'er asked shyly, "Does Master still want Shu'er now?"

Xiang Shaolong reached out and caressed her face, saying with a smile, "I only want you to take a good rest now. Tonight I'll let you become the happiest and luckiest woman in the world." And he suddenly remembered Ting Fangshi and felt a tightness in his chest.

Shu'er used all her strength to grab hold of him, her gaze meeting with his bravely, and said with feelings, "Last night Shu'er has already become the luckiest and happiest woman. I will never forget that ecstatic pain."

Xiang Shaolong can't help but kissed her hardly again, and even reached inside the blankets, delicately touching her lower body and slender legs, making her delirious before he left for the hall.

The 4 maids walked towards him and served him meticulously. The tallest among them, Chunying said, "Master Tao is here, he's waiting for Master in the hall now."

Chapter 8

Master Red Crown

While he was enjoying the earthly pleasures, Xiang Shaolong's mind was in a turmoil.

When he arrived here, everything felt surreal, like a dream. The era he sees before him has got nothing to do with him at all, so he went all out to enjoy himself without feeling any pressure from the society or the people, because he may suddenly be captured by Crazy Ma's machine and be sent back to the 21st century.

He's like a child who does not need to take up any responsibility at all.

But after suffering from injuries and his wanderings, this dreamy world suddenly turned into real flesh and blood.

The martyrdom of Yuan Zong, the sufferings of Ting Fangshi, various setbacks, all threw him deeper and deeper into this world mentally and spiritually.

Although he enjoys beauties and riches now, but he lost his most treasured freedom and independence.

In this warring states period, nothing is more valuable than a talent. One legalist Li Ke and one strategist Wu Qi, is enough to make the state of Wei a

strong state immediately. Shang Yang is even more formidable, he single-handedly made the state of Qin the biggest threat to all the states in the east.

And the Xiang Shaolong now, because he stopped an army of almost a thousand ferocious horse thieves with fifty men, has also become a talent.

The various states only has 2 attitudes towards talent, either to keep for their own use, or to kill without mercy to prevent them from being a powerful opponent in future.

Right now Master Wu is trying to bribe Xiang Shaolong, using riches and beauties to make him sink deeper in. Therefore if he were to reveal even a little about his intention to look for Emperor Qin, Ying Zheng, he can be sure that he'll lose his life immediately.

To try and escape from such heavily guarded city walls is akin to a fool's dream. If Ying Zheng's father did not have the help of Lu Buwei, a wealthy trader similar to Master Wu, he can forget about escaping back to the capital of Qin, Xian Yang.

Even if he can find Emperor Qin, there's no way he can get him out of the city.

Will he have to work for the Zhaos indefinitely? If Master Wu asked him to kill people from other states, what should he do?

Xiang Shaolong sighed and walked towards the hall to see Tao Fang.

Tao Fang was hugging a pretty maid in his arms, his hands roaming over her. He released her when he saw him, and warmly invited him to take a seat and to join in the scrumptious breakfast.

Tao Fang smiled slyly, “Shaolong you don’t know how much the Master likes you. Shu’er is a famed beauty from a noble family in the State of Yan, who was given to Master by the ruler of Yan. It’s obvious that he thinks of you highly since he is willing to give her to you.”

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, “Aren’t we at war with the State of Yan?”

Tao Fang was obviously very impressed by his choice of word ‘we’, and said frankly, “If we’re not at war, why would the ruler of Yan be willing to present such a beautiful virgin. It’s precisely because he’s not doing well in the war, so he’s trying to bribe our Master with such a huge gift, hoping that our Master will help put in some good words for him in front of our King. Hei! Now Master has given the Yan beauty to you, so it’s obvious that he will not help speak up for the Yans.”

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought to himself that this is such a complicated situation, and changed the subject to ask about Ting Fangshi.

Tao Fang smiled mysteriously, “I’ve spoken to Master about this, he’ll certainly give you an answer, so don’t worry! As long as you have more accomplishments, the King would even give you his Princess, much less a dancer.”

Xiang Shaolong thought that things are not going well, but he had no choice

at all. This feeling of being controlled by others is extremely frustrating.

Tao Fang added, “Now I’ll take you to the Wu’s Mansion to meet Master, don’t accept any invitations from your beloved brothers tonight. There’s someone who wants to meet you, but I cannot reveal to you now who that person is.”

Xiang Shaolong’s heart lurched, and he remembered that Lady Ya who was hiding behind the curtains of the horse carriage.

The Wu’s Mansion was the grandest building north of the city, it might even be more appropriate to call it a castle. Tall and thick walls surround it with a moat going around, and the only entrance is a large drawbridge. There are no residential areas outside the walls, only gardens. The grandeur of the place exceeds even that of nobility.

During the journey there, it was the first time Xiang Shaolong really took notice of the people, the things in the city and the buildings. If not for the obvious fact that there are more women to men, it’s not easily detected that this prosperous city has just experienced war, and was even conquered by the Weis for 2 years.

According to Fang Tao, excluding the soldiers, there are about 100,000 families, each family has between a dozen to a few hundred people. Therefore this huge city has an estimated population of over a million people.

Inside the city there were farms, paddy fields and warehouses, so if they are

being besieged, those in the city can still be self sufficient for a long time.

Xiang Shaolong followed Tao Fang and went into a side door past the drawbridge into the Wu's Mansion huge property.

After they went in the main gate, there was enormous training field large enough for a few thousand people, and an imposing huge mansion was facing the gate at the other end. Houses lined both sides of the mansion, and it seems that one day is not enough to tour the whole place.

There were a few hundred people on the training ground separated into groups practicing swordplay, horse riding, archery, and some were even wearing newly made armor and letting others hit them with various weapons to test the sturdiness. But the most exciting place seems to be the archery field, with almost a hundred warriors watching from the side, giving out thunderous cheers once in a while.

Tao Fang's expression suddenly looked awkward.

Xiang Shaolong unconsciously walked nearer, and saw that the archer is a heroic looking young man wearing a red crown, a yellow warrior's robe with a dragon sewn on it and black leather warrior's boots.

He's almost the same height as Xiang Shaolong, maybe an inch or half inch shorter, extremely well built, muscular and full of charisma.

His eyes were shining, his forehead high and wide, his eyes and nose straight, his lips pursed into a line, with an indescribable air of arrogance and

confidence.

Such a handsome and suave man is truly rarely seen.

Sitting on his horse, he placed his arrow on an especially large bow, the hand that pulled the string of the bow was holding another 2 arrows as well.

The string of the bow clanged thrice in quick succession.

The 3 arrows went one after the other, shooting out like a meteor. The first arrow struck the bull's eye of the target about 200 steps away, and the 2 other arrows shot right into the first arrow successively.

The audience was totally enthralled and cheered.

Xiang Shaolong was dumbstruck at the sight. He would not have believed such out of the world archery skill if he had not seen it with his own eyes.

Tao Fang whispered into his ear, "This 'Master Red Crown' Lian Jin is recruited by my nemesis Wu Hei. Regardless of swordplay, horse riding or archery, he's the best in the mansion. This time I lost more than a hundred horses and Wu Hei is already spreading tales in front of Master. Luckily I now have Shaolong, so I managed to save a bit of face, but Wu Hei and Lian Jin will not let us off." When he finished his words, his expression looked pained.

Xiang Shaolong sucked in a breath of cool air. His swordplay may be comparable to this Lian Jin now, but as for riding and archery he is far behind. He was just about to reply when he saw a white cloud floating out from

amongst the audience. A lady with incomparable beauty dressed in white, with figure slightly better than Shu'er's ran excitedly towards Lian Jin and spoke to him intimately. Lian Jin immediately handed the large bow in his hand to someone and spoke to her politely. His grace is indeed enough to enchant any beauty.

Xiang Shaolong's breathing stopped, and he sighed appreciatively, "This must be our state's most beautiful lady."

Tao Fang sighed, "This is our Master's most beloved granddaughter, Miss Wu Tingfang. She's a little interested in Lian Jin, but Master seems to have the intention of marrying her into the royal family and Lian Jin is worried about that now. Come! Master is waiting for us."

The two of them left the crowd and walked towards the great mansion.

Someone shouted from behind, "Master Tao please slow down!"

The two of them turned around in surprise.

That Lian Jin came towards them from the crowd, following behind him is the rare beauty Wu Tingfang.

Xiang Shaolong can't help but look at Wu Tingfang, his eyes made contact with her lively and mischievous eyes, and he felt his heart beating wildly.

Heavens! She look even prettier than a flower, unparalleled in her beauty when seen up close.

When seen from afar earlier he only noticed her chest, waist and legs etc, and already he felt that she's a little better than Shu'er, but she looks even more outstanding when seen close up. The unhidden freshness seems to gush towards him, taking one's breath away. Even though Xiang Shaolong had always prided himself on being a flirt, but now on seeing her he began to feel unworthy.

Like a cottonrose emerging from the clear pond, like nature's carving.

Her natural beauty seems to be made from the tools of the gods, her shoulder carved with a knife, her waist bounded by silk, her neck long and tender, her skin smooth and white, her bright eyes looking around prettily, her dimples sunken in a slight smile, her hair that floated like the clouds, with a jade green hairpin in it, wearing a warrior's clothes with pearls decorating it, her feet wearing tiny calfskin boots, looking exactly like a fairy who came from heaven.

Wu Tingfang saw him staring at her and showed her unhappiness.

Xiang Shaolong was startled from his daze and immediately looked at Lian Jin.

Lian Jin was sizing him up coldly, his expression none too polite.

Tao Fang is a wily old fox indeed, and hurriedly introduced the two of them.

Wu Tingfang said coldly, "Oh! So you're Xiang Shaolong, Grandfather is very impressed with you!"

Lian Jin moved a little closer to Wu Tingfang, to show his familiarity with this beauty, and said with a smile, "I am also very impressed with Brother Xiang, why don't we find a good day and exchange some pointers, and let me see the divine sword that can block an army of 800 horse thieves."

Xiang Shaolong can tell that although his words sounded polite, but it was full of sarcasm, hinting that Tao Fang had been exaggerating about this matter and he was secretly upset. He was thinking that if he can have a freestyle boxing match with this conceited man, he'll surely beat him up until his head is swollen like a pig. But if the competition is on other things, then he'd better avoid it if possible, so he can only smile humbly and replied, "Brother Lian's archery skills is unparalleled, I cannot be compared to you. I'm not qualified enough to exchange pointers with Brother Lian, but would hope that Brother Lian can give some advise when you're free."

When Wu Tingfang thought that they were going to have a duel, she was quite excited but once she heard his reply, she was disappointed and chided him, "Coward!" before turning around and leaving.

Lian Jin is obviously very satisfied with Wu Tingfang's reaction, and he looked heavenward and laughed, "Brother Xiang really disappoints me, in that case I shall not make things difficult for Brother Xiang!" He turned around and ran after Wu Tingfang.

Xiang Shaolong was feeling calm instead, and with a nonchalant laugh, continued walking with Tao Fang towards the huge mansion.

Tao Fang nodded his head, "It's good to tolerate for the time being. Shaolong

may be highly skilled, but I'm afraid you're still not his match." He continued with a low voice, "That lad has been going around Handan looking for people to duel with him, and everyone is scared of him after a few fights. I really hope someone can take him down a peg or two."

Xiang Shaolong knows that he's trying to instigate him, so he smiled and said, "If Master Tao can make it such that there's no restrictions in my duel with him, I am 70% confident that I can teach him a good lesson."

Tao Fang exclaimed happily, "That's easy, let me find a suitable location for Shaolong to show off your ability. How I wish I can see that Wu Hei's expression immediately."

Chapter 9

Never-ending hatred

Xiang Shaolong finally saw Master Wu at the side hall, this person who is not of the nobility, but has the powers of a nobility, controlling the economy of the state of Zhao, the extremely wealthy man who earned his fortunes from keeping livestock.

Xiang Shaolong has never seen a man more grand than him.

Just the crown on his head was encrusted with two rows of 12 glittering purple jewels of similar size.

This rich merchant is large and fat, like a mountain of flesh lying horizontally on the seat, in the arms of a beauty who was cleaning his ears. Another 4 females were carefully filing his fingernails and toenails. Such an ostentatious display, even the emperor may pale in comparison.

The yellow silk robe he wore was twined with dazzling pearls with an air of luxury, the belt around his waist was stunningly bright, with gold and silver pieces reflecting off one another.

He was on a raised platform, about 3 floors high, and below the platform there were 18 warriors standing in 2 rows. Any coward who witnesses such a display would have been scared out of his wits.

When Xiang Shaolong and Tao Fang knelt down to pay their respects, Master Wu sat up and dismissed his maids. His thin and long eyes opened, looking at Xiang Shaolong piercingly, and after sizing him for a moment, said with a cold snort, “Xiang Shaolong, why didn’t you accept Lian Jin’s challenge. Is it because you don’t live up to your reputation at all, but only relied on your commanding looks?”

Xiang Shaolong was shocked.

Tao Fang was about to speak up.

Master Wu gave a loud shout and raised his hand to signal Tao Fang to shut up. His face was already swollen with flesh, and now his features are all scrunched up even more tightly together in the middle of his face and he said with displeasure, “Lian Jin may be a valuable talent, but he’s still from the state of Wei, and not from our state. That’s why I specially ordered him to challenge you so that we Zhaos can show off our prowess. Now that you backed down from the challenge, what else do you have to say.”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly cursing him, but he said without arrogance or servility, “What Shaolong learnt was for killing, and not for such games such as exchanging pointers.”

Master Wu laughed icily, “What’s the difference between the two.”

By now Xiang Shaolong has figured out the character of this rich merchant of livestock, and said haughtily, “The way to kill, is to use all methods, to be ruthless, to kill the enemy at all costs. But exchanging pointers in a duel, is

just to see whose swordplay is more beautifully executed, it's more a game than a battle, so naturally it's another matter altogether."

Master Wu's expression warmed slightly, but he was still not satisfied, and said each word clearly, "I can't possibly ask you to kill a few of my men just like that, so how do I know if you're really that capable?"

Xiang Shaolong's eyes gleamed, and stared back at him without fear. He said with a slight smile, "Since Master has such expectations of me, I will have a duel with Lian Jin, but there must not be any rules on my methods of winning him."

Master Wu stared at him for a while before bursting out into laughter and said, "Very interesting child. His Majesty has always wished that a Zhao would be able to humiliate Lian Jin and help our state of Zhao regain some face. Fine! Then let me arrange a feast, if you can defeat Lian Jin in front of his Majesty, I'll give Fang Tingshi back to you."

Xiang Shaolong knelt down happily, secretly thinking that if he doesn't beat Lian Jin up like how he thrashed Black Faced Deity, he'll write his name Xiang Shaolong backwards.

Master Wu and Tao Fang looked at each other, extremely baffled at his joy and confidence.

Could it be that he really thinks that he can defeat the unparalleled Lian Jin?

They have just returned to the guest house and Xiang Shaolong was about to

slip away to find Shu'er when he bumped into Li Shan and two warriors who is quite close to him at the main door and they dragged him out to celebrate his return.

The 4 of them roamed the streets happily, flirting with the beauties they saw, thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Li Shan said with a laugh, "Handan's beauties are famous for being easy to woo, with Brother Xiang's capabilities, you only have to hook your fingers and I guarantee all the beauties will queue up for Brother Xiang to choose from."

The warrior called Han Dong added, "But Brother Xiang need not find women on the streets today, we've especially found some sweet ladies to accompany you."

Another warrior Zha Bei put his arms around his shoulder and said, "Don't ever think that we're finding some used goods as obligations. We've specially prepared for Brother Xiang the noble daughter of a high-ranking officer, who is outstandingly beautiful. She can only blame her father for antagonizing the Emperor, so she was demoted to become a prostitute for officials. I guarantee that Brother Xiang will be satisfied."

Xiang Shaolong furrowed his brows when he heard that, and began to understand why Yuan Zong wanted to change this world. Ai! But how can he have the capability to fulfill his dream. What he can do is to give these ill fated women who has become prostitutes a little more gentleness and love, and by the time he thought of that, he was already pushed into a grand

mansion by the other three.

A skinny man of about 40 wearing a splendid outfit welcomed them, "Welcome Master Xiang, Sirs please come to the guest room on the second floor."

The 4 of them sat down on the rug in the room, and after the maids sent in wine and dishes, a procuress by the name of Hong Niangzi came is. Although she's middle-aged, but she took great care in dolling up, and her figure is still well maintained. Coupled with her intoxicating style, she's still able to stir some blood. On seeing such a handsome man like Xiang Shaolong, she was especially warm in her welcome and said with a coquettish smile, "The lady will be here immediately to accompany Master Xiang, would Master Li and the rest want to try someone fresh."

Li Shan and the rest agreed with a laugh and Hong Niangzi went out of the room with her plush hips swaying.

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought that it's no wonder that prostitution is the oldest occupation in the world, and it's always the same method and atmosphere. But why is it that in the past when he was in the bars going after the beer ladies, he never felt his conscience pricking, but now he kept feeling this is not quite appropriate?

The sounds of jewelry clinking can be heard from the corridor outside, followed by the whiff of a fragrance and 3 pretty young ladies wearing a thin gauzes walked in with a smile. They sat in the arms of Li Shan and the rest, but were making eyes at Xiang Shaolong, obviously they were more

interested in him.

By now Hong Niangzi has brought in a tall, slim and fair lady, who looked extremely pretty and bright, with a graceful air about her. Indeed she looked extremely pure.

Li Shan and the rest stared, looking greedily at the magnificent scenery beneath her thin veil of clothes.

Hong Niangzi laughed, "I did not lie to you, right? Good daughter, have you ever seen a better looking and loving man than Master Xiang?"

The beauty lowered her eyes sadly, refusing to lift her head up at all.

Xiang Shaolong couldn't bear to see this and was about to say something when Hong Niangzi pushed her into her arms, sitting on his lap.

The thighs touching his, a wave of intoxication spread over him, and the well-proportioned body covered by a thin veil, seemingly revealing the luscious bosom, made Xiang Shaolong's eyes blurry. He can't help but hug her tiny waist and took a sniff of her face.

Su Nu lowered her head and did not speak.

Hong Niangzi made eyes at Xiang Shaolong, walked behind him and leaned over, pressing her bosom tightly into his back, going between the two of them and said softly, "Master Xiang is the lady's first customer. If not for the fact that Master Li used the name of Master Wu, I wouldn't have let this

good girl accompany Master Xiang before her training is done. Because of this, if Su Nu has offended you in any way, Master Xiang please forgive her.” And she left with a smile.

Xiang Shaolong looked at the lady’s slender fingers, listening to how Li Shan and the rest were teasing her, and he felt a rush of anger in his chest. He whispered gently into the Su Nu’s ears, “Don’t worry! I won’t be disrespectful towards you like them. We’ll just chat and drink, all right?”

Su Nu was stunned for a moment, and finally lifted her head up to look at this strange man who is being so intimate with her.

Xiang Shaolong smiled at her.

Su Nu blushed and immediately lowered her head, but she’s no longer so afraid. She can’t help but steal another glance at him, and her heart started beating wildly, thinking to herself that this man is really good looking. And it’s rare that his gaze looked so upright and honorable. Oh heavens! Why did she have to meet a man like that only at a place like this?

Xiang Shaolong felt his desire rising as well, but once he thought of his promised, he hurriedly suppressed his fire.

Su Nu gritted her teeth, raised her head and looked at him shyly and said, “I thank Master for your kind intentions. Master need not feel pity that I have been reduced to such a situation, besides there’s no use in pity as well. Anyone here can tease me at will.”

Xiang Shaolong felt a sadness in his heart and sighed.

Su Nu was perplexed and she hugged his neck, asking, “Master seems to be troubled!”

Xiang Shaolong looked at Li Shan and the rest, and saw that those 3 men’s hands and mouth were already roaming around the ladies in their arms, totally engrossed in doing various unspeakable things. He said with a bitter smile, “I only wish to leave now, and have no wish to witness further the sad things that happened in this world.”

Su Nu was surprised and exclaimed, “Master’s thinking is really different from the others. All the men that came here has never thought of our sadness and pain.” She continued quietly, “I’m not lying to Master, but now I really hope that Master will be impolite to me, just like that 3 friends of yours.”

This time it was Xiang Shaolong’s turn to be surprised, “Why would you think that?”

Su Nu said shyly, “Maybe I’m affected by them, and my desires have been flamed, or maybe I have fallen in love with Master. I’m not sure myself!”

The girl Li Shan was hugging stood up at this point in time and said breathlessly, “The night is short, why don’t we go up to our own rooms for more fun. Brother Xiang must not forget Master Tao’s appointment tonight.”

Just as they were about to step out of the room, Hong Niangzi came in

looking miserable and said, “Sirs, I am in a difficult position!”

Li Shan was extremely surprised, and pulled the official courtesan to sit on the rug and asked in bafflement, “Hong Niangzi is in charge of the official courtesans in Handan, who would dare to make things difficult for you. Just tell us, and we will settle it for you.”

Hong Niangzi looked at Li Shan with a little disdain, and turned towards Xiang Shaolong and said, “I don’t know who leaked the news, Prince Shaoyuan just came with a dozen or so of his men to the officials brothel and demanded that I hand Su Nu to him.”

The expression on Li Shan and the rest changed, obviously this Prince Shaoyuan is someone so powerful that even they cannot afford to offend him.

Su Nu went “Ah!”, her pretty face turned pale, her body shook, like a little lamb waiting to be slaughtered.

Hong Niangzi sighed and said, “No one in Handan now can afford to offend Prince Shaojun. We can only blame Su Nu’s beauty for being so famous. Su Nu, come with me!”

Su Nu screamed, “No!” and hugged Xiang Shaolong in a death grip as she stood up crying, making others pity her even more so.

Li Shan and Han Dong exchanged looks helplessly and explained to Xiang Shaolong, “Prince Shaoyuan is the son of Prince Pingyuan, who passed away

last year and the family's power has been passed to him. Even our Master has to be careful of him and his Majesty has been protecting him on account on Prince Pingyuan. If we were to clash with him, we may not be able to win the swordsmen under him, and even if we did, Master will not forgive us. Brother Xiang, we did not expect such a killjoy would happen as well."

Xiang Shaolong hugged Su Nu's burning and helpless body, hot blood rushing through him and said with a cold snort, "A man has to be responsible for his own actions. You will leave immediately, and you won't know what happened."

The expression on the three changed.

Hong Niangzi quite liked Xiang Shaolong, so on hearing that she sighed, "Master Xiang is indeed a hero, but is it worth it to end your future and life thus? Prince Shaoyuan only wants Su Nu's virginity, won't it be the same if Master Xiang comes a little later to look for Su Nu?"

Li Shan and the rest tried to dissuade him as well.

Su Nu suddenly gave a hard kiss on Xiang Shaolong's lips, a look of resolution on her face and whispered in his ear, "Don't worry! Su Nu is going." She stood up, her expression wooden and told Hong Niangzi, "I will follow you!" After taking a loving look at Xiang Shaolong, she walked slowly away.

Hong Niangzi sighed and ran after her.

Xiang Shaolong punched the pillar, the wood shattered, anger rising up inside

him.

This is an era where power is reason. On when riding on others can one have control over their own fate and protect the woman one loves.

Looking at it from another angle, he's only another kind of prostitute, selling his wits and skills.

The rest may have patriotic ideals and are willing to lay down their lives, but he, Xiang Shaolong will never follow orders from anyone blindly. Because half a year ago he is not even related to this era at all.

What Yuan Zong said was correct, only when all the states are unified, will there be a chance for everything to be changed and an ideal system will appear.

And the most important task now is to establish his position in the Wu family, there's no other way besides this.

By now, their mood totally spoiled, the four of them left hurriedly.

Xiang Shaolong had just stepped into the garden at the guest house when he felt the strange atmosphere. Two warriors were standing guard outside the main door, and he seemed to hear Shu'er's cries from inside the house.

Xiang Shaolong was still fuming, and he's not someone kind or religious, but forced by circumstances to bear with that bully Prince Shaoyuan. Now that someone is trying to climb over his head, he dashed into the door like a mad

tiger.

The 2 warriors snickered and extended their hands to stop him.

Xiang Shaolong roared madly and forced his way between the two men, elbows and knees striking and the two of them fell down screaming immediately.

The scene that appeared before him was even more terrible.

Shu'er was naked from the waist and being hugged by a finely dressed gentleman on the rug, her bosom insultingly handled. However she dared not struggle but just cried piteously.

Lian Jin and another 10 odd warriors were sitting at the side, looking at this violent scene with smiles.

By now that well dressed youth was just removing his hands from Shu'er's skirt and was about to take it off.

When the warriors saw Xiang Shaolong dashing in, they all jumped up and drew their swords, while Lian Jin was calm and composed, the corner of his mouth curled up in disdain, looking at him icily.

Because the wooden sword was too heavy, Xiang Shaolong did not carry it with him all the time, but for a man like him who has undergone the most scientific and rigorous training, would he be afraid of these men. Before his opponents are steady on their feet, he'd already dashed into the crowd of

warriors and cornered one of them, throwing a heavy punch at the person's chest and snatched his long sword from him.

He turned around with the sword, executing the Mozi swordplay that originated from the Master Mo Zhai, slashing hard at the sword of the warrior who came attacking towards his right.

“Clang!”. That person roared, and before his sword reached the ground, he was already kicked in the groin and knelt down in a painful shout.

A look of surprise flashed though Lian Jin's eyes and he stood up, standing in front of that young master. Shu'er saw that Xiang Shaolong has come to save her and without knowing where she found her strength from, pushed that young master away and ran crying towards Xiang Shaolong.

But Lian Jin extended his feet to trip her and she immediately fell to the ground. Lian Jin stepped on her naked back, and she was unable to move at all.

Xiang Shaolong was almost bursting with anger on seeing this, and with a sweep of his sword, blocked the 5 swords that was attacking him, and with a change of his swordplay, another 2 men fell immediately.

By now he's only about ten odd steps away from Lian Jin and that young master, but between them there are 12 fierce warriors. On seeing that Shu'er is about to fall into the hands of that young master again, Xiang Shaolong picked up a pile of swords and threw them beneath the feet of the warriors who were running towards him.

Those warriors have never fought in such a way before, the swords struck their waists and legs and they fell to the ground.

When Xiang Shaolong jumped up, he is already face to face with Lian Jin, staring into each other's eyes.

Lian Jin kicked Shu'er aside, his hand moved and he drew his long sword from the scabbard. The sword gleamed and made its way towards Xiang Shaolong.

Xiang Shaolong did not expect his opponent's swordplay to be so exquisite. He executed the essence of the Mozi swordplay clumsily and lashed out with his sword.

A crisp "Clang!" was heard and Lian Jin's sword was parried off. He retracted then attacked again, as fast as a meteor.

Xiang Shaolong wanted to block that attack but 2 warriors were coming up from behind him so he had no choice but to step back and block the two opponents first.

Lian Jin smiled icily but did not give chase.

"Stop!"

A loud shout came from the door and Tao Fang dashed in with 10 odd warriors towards Xiang Shaolong, forcing Lian Jin's men to retreat to one side, resulting in a face-off between the two groups.

The half naked Shu'er got up and threw herself into Xiang Shaolong's arms, crying.

Tao Fang saw the young master behind Lian Jin and his expression changed immediately, "Old servant here does not know that Grand Young Master is here, would Grand Young Master please forgive me."

Xiang Shaolong hugged Shu'er and realization dawned. No wonder Lian Jin had the guts to create trouble here, so he has the backing of Master Wu's grandson.

That Grand Young Master came next to Lian Jin and ignoring Tao Fang, pointed to Xiang Shaolong with a murderous look in his eye and asked, "Who do you think you are, what's the big deal about me having some fun with your woman."

Lian Jin smiled icily and said, "It should be his honor!"

Tao Fang smiled condescendingly and said, "It's just a case of misunderstanding, Shaolong did not know it is Grand Young Master who has come!"

That Grand Young Master stared at Shaolong angrily.

Xiang Shaolong stared back so unwaveringly, that even a bully like Grand Young Master felt a shiver in his heart.

Lian Jin shouted, "What audacity! How dare you be so rude to Master

Tingwei, kneel down now.”

Tao Fang advised from the side, “Hurry up and apologize to Grand Young Master!”

Xiang Shaolong looked heavenward and laughed for a long time before saying, “Master is the only one whom I will obey, if Grand Young Master is not happy about that, then tell someone to kill me!” He lowered his head and said to Shu’er, “You’ll go back to the room first!”

Shu’er lifted up her tear stained face, and after taking a loving look at him, ran into the house.

The atmosphere became extremely tense.

Lian Jin hurriedly went to Wu Tingwei and whispered something into his ears.

Xiang Shaolong knows that Lian Jin has received news that he will be dueling with him in front of Emperor Xiaocheng, so he has no wish to fight with him first now.

Indeed, Wu Tingwei nodded his head and stared at him angrily, saying, “I’ll see how many more good days you low-down slave will have ahead of you.” And left with his men in fury.

Lian Jin deliberately brushed past his shoulder and said with a smile before leaving, “You blocked well with your sword, but lack experience. It’ll be rare if you can block 10 attacks of mine.”

Xiang Shaolong calmed down and was secretly dreading being reprimanded by Tao Fang, but after Tao Fang waved his men away, he sat closely next to him and sighed, "Now my fate is intertwined with yours. If you lose to Lian Jin, I won't have the face to stay on in the Wu Family as well."

Xiang Shaolong felt extremely guilty and apologized.

Tao Fang looked at him for a moment before he suddenly smiled, "You're really someone who treasures relationships, but this has got nothing to do with you. Among the 12 servants, Master trusts Wu Hei and me the most, and we've always been on opposing ends. This time Wu Hei went around spreading rumors that because I lost a hundred odd horses, I made up a story about you single handedly fighting 800 horse thieves. Now the Master is giving me no choice but to let you fight a duel with Lian Jin. Shaolong you must help me vent my anger." He continued with a smile, "Just now you felled almost 10 of Grand Young Master's warriors in front of Lian Jin, now that may not be a bad thing, because one news of this gets to Master's ears, he'll look at you differently. If you can win Lian Jin, then the world will belong to you and me."

Li Shan hurriedly walked over and said with shock, "Before Su Nu went to see Prince Shaoyuan, she made an excuse to change and freshen up but hanged herself instead. Prince Shaoyuan is extremely furious and said that he's going to look for Brother Xiang to vent his anger."

Xiang Shaolong felt as if the earth has shattered, and is so livid that his limbs turned cold, his eyes and mouth opened in shock, but his tears rolled uncontrollably down the corner of his eyes.

For the first time in his life, he felt a strong, burning desire for revenge.

Xiang Shaolong made mad love with Shu'er on the rug in the room.

Only her alluring body can offer him a form of escape in this cruel era where power is everything.

Only at this moment did he understand why Mei Canniang would rather suffer the parting and pine for him than to come to Handan.

No matter how difficult it is, he will use the most brutal method to kill Prince Shaoyuan at all costs to avenge Su Nu.

The two of them held each other and lay down, their limbs entangling, enjoying the warm atmosphere in the aftermath of their coupling.

Shu'er suddenly exclaimed, "Xiang Lang*! Shu'er is really afraid that we won't have such happy times very soon."

*Lang – similar to the term husband

Xiang Shaolong smiled and said, "Don't worry! Tao Fang will explain to Master Wu that if his grandson and Lian Jin keep harassing me, I will definitely lose at the imperial duel due to agitation. Therefore before the duel, you'll be safe."

Shu'er was a little assured, and said resolutely, "If anything bad were to happen to Xiang Lang, Shu'er will definitely follow you in death."

Xiang Shaolong kissed her tiny lips and said gently, “Don’t worry! I definitely will not lose.”

A knock on the door was heard, and Chunying’s voice filtered in, “Master Xiang, Master Tao has ordered us to help you bath and change.”

Shu’er sat up and said happily, “Let Shu’er serve you wholeheartedly this morning.”

Chapter 10

Spending the night together

Tao Fang spoke to Xiang Shaolong quietly through the carriage window, “I know that Shaolong has long guessed that it’s Lady Ya who wants to see you. Ever since her husband Zhao Kuo died in the battle of Chang Ping, that wanton has been hunting handsome men everyday to become her intimate guests. If she’s satisfied after trying them out, she’ll keep them as her lover, and Lian Jin is one of them.”

Xiang Shaolong asked quietly, “Does her brother Emperor Xiaocheng know about this?”

Tao Fang replied, “The whole city is full of spies, how could his Majesty not know. It’s just that in the past his Majesty was tricked by Fan Ju from the state of Qin, and replaced Lian Po* with Zhao Kuo, refusing to listen to the advise of the then Prime Minister Lin Xiangru. He sent Zhao Kuo, who can only talk but doesn’t know how to strategize a war, to fight the Qin soldiers at Changping, and caused the 400,000 brave soldiers to be almost totally annihilated. Zhao Kuo died in the battlefield, and only about 240 survivors returned. His Majesty felt guilt towards his sister, so he condones her actions. Therefore Lady Ya holds a certain amount of influence over his Majesty, so don’t you offend her.” He signaled the footmen to start the journey.

Xiang Shaolong felt that the entire situation was hilarious.

When he reached Wu An initially, he had thought of becoming a gigolo to earn money for traveling expenses. Who would have expected that now he would have no choice but to really become a gigolo, and his customer is that Lady Ya.

He has suffered enough setbacks and anguish, and has no mood to enjoy the changing scenery outside the window because his heart is in turmoil.

His thinking in the past was quite naïve, thinking that with his military training he will be able to excel in this era. But he did not expect such complications, and like the same across all eras, brute strength is not enough to accomplish anything.

If he wants to control his own fate, he'll have to use extreme measures, and step on everyone else so that he will not have to be led around by the nose.

The most important thing right now is to defeat Lian Jin. But in the earlier fight with him, this person's swordplay is truly at his peak. Even if he were to include wrestling in the duel, he might still not be able to win.

Besides, what Lian Jin said was correct, he has only learnt the Mozi swordplay for a few months, and is not that experienced yet, so how can he win him.

When they duelled earlier, Lian Jin was exceptionally calm and composed, just like what Yuan Zong said a true swordsman should achieve. But he on the other hand was rash and impulsive, if he can't change this, he will certainly lose, so what should he do?

Suddenly he had an idea, and thought of that extreme beauty Wu Tingfang.

If he can win her heart, what kind of a blow will it be for Lian Jin who thinks the world of himself? When it comes to wooing ladies, it has always been his forte, so there's no way that hateful babe Wu Tingfang will be able to reject him. The problem is that in ancient times there's no such thing as phoning to arrange a date, so how can he get to her himself?

By now the carriage has gone passed a huge mansion, with guards standing at the door. He saw people wearing clothes that doesn't seem to be usual outfit for the Zhaos walking in and out so he asked the footman who was driving the carriage.

The footman replied, "That's the house in Handan which belongs to people from other states."

Xiang Shaolong was secretly overjoyed, and thought that maybe the Qin Emperor Ying Zheng is staying in there, and he can't help but feel uplifted.

The horse carriage turned right into another main road made from cobblestones, and proceeded towards a huge mansion.

Xiang Shaolong collected his composure and told himself, "Xiang Shaolong! This is the time for you to change, you cannot be so trusting towards others anymore or let feelings rule your head."

Fine!

Then let me try something, and conquer this Lady Ya first to give Lian Jin his first heavy setback.

After changing into a set of fitting warrior's clothes with a cloak, matched with a long sword at his waist and his hair combed neatly into a crown, Xiang Shaolong followed 2 lovely maids and stepped into Lady Ya's grand mansion.

The pretty maid invited him to sit on the rug and gave him scented tea before leaving him sitting alone in the spacious hall.

Xiang Shaolong was bored and started observed his surroundings.

The hall was exquisitely decorated, with a silk painting on palace people on the wall, the colors vibrant.

There was a large rug in the middle of the hall woven with pictures of clouds, the color clean and simple, very pleasing to the eyes. The few cupboards against the wall were full of playthings. If he can just take any one of them back to the 21st century and put it up for auction, he'll be rich for the rest of his life.

Right at this time, he had a feeling of being watched.

Xiang Shaolong glanced nonchalantly at a large folding screen on his left which was made up of 8 paintings, and seem to see from the gap in between the reflection from an eye. He was secretly laughing, and knew that this must be Lady Ya who has come to inspect the goods.

If he appears to be uneasy or do anything embarrassing while waiting impatiently, this wonton Lady Ya who loves toying with men will surly despise him. Once he thought about this, he became mischievous and stood up, sweeping his cape aside to reveal his manly body that can intoxicate any female. He stretched and walked to a large window and looked out so that Lady Ya can just see his chiseled left profile.

He stood straight like a mountain, one hand behind him, the other hand resting on his sword, a look of deep thought in his expression, very immersed in his acting.

He did not bring his wooden sword, because that's his secret weapon and he did not wish to reveal it to anyone before his duel with Lian Jin.

The garden outside the window looked especially pretty and calming under the rays of the setting sun.

A gentle breeze blew, uplifting his spirits.

For a moment he forgot that Lady Ya is peeping at him, and remembered his own era.

In that era, the rule of strong eating the weak has not changed, but there are still laws, and regulations between different countries. But in this warring states period, the ruler's order is law, the words of the state is maxim, so it seems that Emperor Qin did not do anything appalling at all. If he did not unify China, they will be eaten by other countries sooner or later. It is Emperor Qin who built the Great Wall that helped China maintain its unity

for a long time.

Footsteps were heard.

The pretty maid came to invite him in to see Lady Ya, and to remove his sword.

Xiang Shaolong knows that he has passed the first round, so he removed his sword and followed the pretty maid in.

He had just stepped into the door and immediately he saw a pretty lady lying down on a long couch at the other end, looking totally relaxed with a hand supporting her chin. A pair of alluring yet dreamy looking eyes was sizing him up coldly, her fair legs peeping out from her skirt, creating a picturesque scene of a beauty lazing that is enough to make any man fall head over heels.

The small hall was not lighted, the setting sun shone in from two large windows with floral carving from the west.

The pretty maid went out, leaving Xiang Shaolong standing in front of the door. He really has no idea what the material that Lady Ya, who was still lying in the chaise, was made of. Maybe it's made with silk mixed with something else, as it was radiating. Her earrings were made from pretty jade, a golden hairpin gleaming in her hair, pearls decorating her clothes, her skirt light and sheer, her body emanating a heavy fragrance.

The shape of her face is extremely pretty, her brows well drawn, her smooth skin fair with a tinge of red, extremely alluring.

The most intoxicating part is her idle yet alluring pose, her mature and enchanting ways, compared to Wu Tingfang, she is another kind of beauty who certainly did not fare any worse.

She cannot be any older than 25, right in the prime of a woman's life.

Xiang Shaolong's interest is already piqued, but in order to conquer this beauty, he deliberately pretended to be unaffected and proud, and walked boldly forward, stopping 5 paces in front of her, bowed and said, "Xiang Shaolong pays his respects to Lady Ya." After he finished speaking, he stared boldly at her alluring body but did not reveal any lecherous look at all, and looked as if he's just admiring a plaything on one of the shelves at the outer hall.

Lady Ya laughed coquettishly, emitting a clear, crisp voice that sounds even nicer than bells and said gently, "Xiang Shaolong! Take a seat!"

Xiang Shaolong smiled slightly and sat down suavely. He looked deeply into her pretty eyes, but did not speak.

Madam Ya said unhappily, "I've never seen someone who look at me with such disrespect and audacity, don't you know my status?"

Xiang Shaolong smiled lazily, and replied with indescribable confidence, "How would I not know Lady's status, but it still does not change the fact that I am a man and you are a woman. I'm admiring Lady the way a man will look at a woman, and this shows that Lady's allure is enough to make me forget about your higher status."

Lady Ya was stunned, and sat up straight.

Xiang Shaolong's gaze dropped to her perk bosom, this time he is not pretending.

Lady Ya exclaimed angrily, "How rude! What are you looking at?"

Xiang Shaolong knows that it's time to stop, so he said with a serious and respectful expression, "Since Lady does not like me revealing my true feelings, then feel free to punish me."

Lady Ya was a little helpless as she replied, "Forget it! Do you know why I summoned you."

Xiang Shaolong very much wanted to say of course he's here to sleep with her, but of course he dared not reveal this, so he said calmly, "Of course I do, Lady wants to see if Xiang Shaolong is the thing that Lady has been looking for all this time."

Lady Ya's pretty eyes lighted up, and after exchanging a long look with him, said, "Humph" and laughed, "I've never seen a man more conceited than you."

Xiang Shaolong stood up with a smile and bowed, "Since you are so displeased with me, then I shall take my leave." And turned around to leave.

Lady Ya did not expect him to do this and exclaimed angrily, "Stop there, or don't you want your life anymore."

Xiang Shaolong turned around and said with a charming smile, “Lady please don’t be upset, actually how can I bear to leave. I just wanted to see if Lady will ask me to stay and spend the night.”

Lady Ya was in a flurry after being attacked by his brilliant eyes, overpowering charisma and strong words, making her look even more alluring.

The last ray of the sun finally disappeared from the west under the plains outside the city of Handan.

The small hall became dark, throwing this couple into a mysterious environment.

Xiang Shaolong walked to a small table at Lady Ya’s side and knelt on the rug, reached out his hand, took the kindle from the table and lighted the exquisite lamp made from jade.

Under the light, Lady Ya’s eyes became two round and bright rare black precious stones.

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought to himself, this is the first time since he arrived that he tasted such a romantic ancient atmosphere. He must have the beautiful body beneath that fine silk tonight no matter what, and totally conquer both her body and her mind.

This is the dream of every man who has ever seen her, and he is no exception.

He moved towards her as he knelt, grabbed her shoulders and said gently, "Do you want me to treat you as a Lady or a woman, would Lady please tell me."

Lady Ya realized that there's no way she can play coy any further, so her body softened and she fell into his arms and said with a soft sigh, "Why must Xiang Shaolong force me thus?"

Xiang Shaolong lifted up her delicate chin, tilting her head up and kissed her gently a dozen times on her lips before giving her a hard kiss. He used all his kissing skills learnt from porn movies and comics as well as his most tried and tested effective skills to flirt with this beauty. He took the opportunity to move his hand down, sweeping past her bosom and soft waist, his palm pressing down on her taut and fiery tummy.

Lady Ya's writhed her body, her whole body lightly trembling, her breathing getting more and more rapid, her tongue's reaction getting more and more intense. Obviously she is starting to get aroused.

Xiang Shaolong left her fragrant shoulder, looking at her heavy-lidded eyes lovingly and asked emotionally, "Is Lady happy?"

Lady Ya revealed a look of loss and said quietly, "Am I happy? No! I never dared to think of this question."

Xiang Shaolong secretly sighed, beautiful women always have hard lives, and the responsibility of course falls on the men. But beauty is as short lived as a dream, so there's not a lot of beauties who can be happy when their beauty

is slowly fading.

Ancient beauties are thus short lived, never allowing others to see them growing old.

Therefore Lady Ya wants to hunt handsome men for pleasure while she's still in her prime. But modern research papers have pointed out that such mindless sex will not make one happy.

So Xiang Shaolong came straight to the point and asked her this question. Lady Ya immediately revealed her true feelings unconsciously, because he has touched a sore spot.

Xiang Shaolong wanted to remove her belt.

Lady Ya smiled coquettishly, and grabbing his hands, suddenly pulled him up and said happily like a little girl, "But I know I'll be very happy tonight. Here! Come to my room, I've prepared food and wine and we can chat and drink at the same time, all right?"

Lady Ya placed the wine cup at Xiang Shaolong's lips, a flirty smile on her pretty face and said, "This is the first cup of wine, Shaolong shall we each drink half of it?"

Xiang Shaolong was secretly laughing that no matter how noble is her birth or how high is her status, she is still a woman who needs the love and care of a man. So with this point, he will be able to make himself irresistible to her.

The only way to conquer her is to treat her like an ordinary woman, and the most important thing is to make her feel that it's better to be a woman than a Lady.

He's very confident that he can accomplish this.

The only question is how important Lian Jin is to her, because he is also a very attractive man.

Lady Ya can be considered to be another battlefield for him and Lian Jin.

He drank half a cup of wine from Lady Ya's hands, and suddenly kissed her on the mouth, slowly passing the fine wine into her tiny mouth.

Lady Ya gurgled but she has no strength to push him away, so she can only drink his half-cup of wine obediently. Her pretty face blushed, and even her enchanting dimples were reddened.

Xiang Shaolong left her tiny mouth, gently taking over the cup from her fingers, and before she had the chance to protest, poured it into her tiny mouth that was panting quickly. He said gently, "This half cup is mine, so don't you drink it into your pretty belly."

Lady Ya rolled her eyes at him coquettishly, her fragrant lips already locked with his, the wine in her mouth sucked dry by him.

The two of them separated. Either Lady Ya is a bad drinker, or she is too heated by desire, but she moaned and collapsed into his arms.

Xiang Shaolong has no wish to conquer this noble beauty so soon, so he tilted her face up and scattered hot kisses on her hair, face, ears and neck.

Lady Ya finally removed all her barriers and guards, and was panting and moaning, unable to control herself.

Xiang Shaolong's hand slipped into her clothes, lovingly kneading the smooth and supple thighs and tummy, teasing her tender and soft skin inch by inch, not missing a single spot and said gently, "Do you have the feeling of being toyed by a man now?"

Lady Ya asked, "Are you really not leaving me with any dignity at all?" and she continued moaning.

Xiang Shaolong's hands stopped but he did not take them out of her clothes. He tilted his head and looked at this beauty with a head of messy hair, disheveled clothes, with a pair of fair legs and half her bosom exposed to the air. The corners of his mouth curved into a slight smile and he asked, "Can I take a close look at Lady Ya's body?"

Lady Ya replied hoarsely, "You have touched it so many times now, and yet you're still asking me?"

Xiang Shaolong looked heavenward and laughed loud and long. The heroic air he exudes melted Lady Ya's heart immediately, and she lowered her head and said submissively, "Look then! You can look all you want."

Xiang Shaolong knows that he's getting closer to success, or else she would not behave with such abandon and obedience.

His hands immediately started, at times gentle, at times wild, and a little brutish as well, beginning the actual attack on her.

The night passed like that.

She is no longer a lady of noble birth, but a shameless woman in heated desire enjoying her lover's ministrations.

Every second is filled with fiery desire.

The joy between a man and a woman drove into Lady Ya wave by wave, making her delirious. She cried out the name of this lovely yet hateful man madly, touching and hugging this perfect male body, feeling his explosive strength and his seemingly endless intense attacks, reaching the fiery peak where soul meets desire time and again. In the past when she was with other men, she'd always chase them away immediately after the act and sleep alone, even Lian Jin was no exception. But tonight she has no wish to leave this man's embrace even for a moment.

But only for tonight.

Everything will be different tomorrow, no man will be able to make her surrender.

She only wants to capture men, but does not wish to be captured,

because that would be too torturous.

She fell into a deep sleep in her daze, and when she woke up it's already late in the morning.

Xiang Shaolong is already gone, only leaving behind on the blanket a yellow chrysanthemum freshly plucked from the garden.

Lady Ya clutched tightly at the stem, a sweet and satisfied alluring smile appeared on her pretty face.

Chapter 11

The Affections of a Beauty

When Xiang Shaolong returned to the guesthouse, Tao Fang is already waiting for him.

After Chunying and the rest of the maids carried in their breakfast, they left.

Tao Fang sniggered and asked, "Is that flirtatious horse exciting?"

Xiang Shaolong replied from the bottom of his heart, "Extremely exciting."

Tao Fang stopped smiling and said seriously, "Master brought up the issue of your duel with Lian Jin to his Majesty, his Majesty was very happy and chose the duel to be at dusk the day after tomorrow. I think it's best that you do not tangle with women for these few days, conserve your energy. You must win this duel."

Xiang Shaolong replied with some embarrassment, "Don't worry! I'm the kind that of person that, with more women I have, the more energetic I am. If there are no women, I'm more lethargic instead." When he saw that he looked doubtful, he added, "Don't forget that on the night we dealt with the horse thieves, Ting Fangshi was sleeping with me."

Of course Tao Fang does not know that he did not copulate with Ting Fangshi that night, and after looking at him with admiration, said, "Now you've

become the center of attraction in Handan, and on the same par as Master, even Guo Zong, who made his fortune from ironworks, was asking about you.”

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in surprise, “What? There’s actually someone else who is equally wealthy as our Master?”

Tao Fang replied, “There is only one such person in the state of Zhao. If we were to measure the number of Master’s livestock using valleys, then the weapons that Guo Zong made from iron can be measured using ships. Not only did he supply weapons for the whole of Zhao, but also to all the other friendly states, earning a large sum of money.” He lowered his voice and continued, “Because of this, his Majesty is more fond of Guo Zong than our Master, because Master’s Father is a half-Qin, that’s why he has such a strange name.”

Xiang Shaolong’s heart lurched, as if he has a hazy idea, but is unable to describe it clearly.

Tao Fang added on, “I received confidential news last night, that rascal Wu Tingwei is very displeased with you, and very much wanted to have your Yan nobility, Shu’er. That’s why he has decided to disregard Master’s orders and will kill you before your duel with Lian Jin. It seems like I will have to bring you along to pay a call to Young Master, so that that rascal will not dare to make any rash moves.”

Xiang Shaolong was still thinking about the matter regarding Master Wu

having Qin blood in him. No wonder he wanted so much for a Zhao to win Lian Jin, but maybe that's not what he truly felt, but did this to show the Zhao Emperor that he is totally on their side. That's why he refused to speak up for the Yans, and instead gave a beauty like Shu'er to him because of this thinking of his.

In the warring states period there is nothing more important than bloodline, so from this it can be seen what a difficult task it would be to unite the people from so many different countries. When he heard what Tao Fang said, he asked, "Will Lian Jin be helping that rascal deal with me?"

Tao Fang is really open with him now, and did not try to hide anything, saying "Even if you put a sword to Lian Jin's neck now, he would not dare to start the fight first. That scoundrel went around picking fights because he wanted to get his Majesty's attention. However his Majesty has always ignored him, and even told the people around him that he's not happy that our Master have found a foreigner to make our own swordsmen look bad. Not that he's got this chance, he would not want to spoil it."

Xiang Shaolong thought that this King Zhao is so narrow minded, how can he every accomplish anything great. He said with a laugh, "Without Lian Jin, I'm not afraid of that rascal, he can't possibly find a few hundred people to attack me, right?"

Tao Fang was extremely impressed with his humor and chortled, "Of course not, and besides, he has to do this secretly. But it's still better to pay a call to Eldest Young Master. Among Master's 17 sons, Eldest Young Master is the most capable and is in charge of all business with other states. And he has a

beautiful daughter Wu Tingfang who may have the opportunity of becoming the empress, but his Majesty is still hesitating about accepting Young Grand Missy because of Master having Qin blood in him. The nobility in the royal family are all objecting to this.”

Xiang Shaolong is getting all confused from all these. Things that look very simple on the surface, is actually extremely complicated, so he nodded his head and replied, “All right! I’ll pay a call to Eldest Young Master once I have the chance.”

Tao Fang replied, “What chance or no chance, I’ll take you to see Eldest Young Master immediately. We need to gain the upper hand and not let Wu Tingwei strike first.”

Xiang Shaolong furrowed his brows and said, “At least let me change my clothes first!”

Tao Fang laughed, “Hurry up! I’ll wait here for you.”

Xiang Shaolong slipped back into his room hurriedly.

Shu’er and the 4 maids were rushing to make his warrior clothes so that he can wear it to see the King of Zhao. Xiang Shaolong’s mood turned for the better, and his hands started roaming over the 5 ladies and enjoying their careful ministrations at the same time, making his one mistress and 4 maids all blush to their ears before he left with Tao Fang on horses to the Wu residence.

They came to the bustling martial arts practice field, went around the large mansion where they say Master Wu the other day, walked past a garden to another grand courtyard.

The two of them were invited to wait in the large hall.

After a while, a warrior walked out and invited Tao Fang in, leaving Xiang Shaolong alone, who wondered why that Eldest Young Master did not see them both?

At this point in time that warrior walked out again and told Xiang Shaolong, "Would Master Xiang please follow me!"

Xiang Shaolong followed him and went into another side hall first before abruptly turning left into a garden.

Xiang Shaolong was suspicious, and that warrior's steps quickened suddenly. Right at this time, there was a flash of sword, and 2 long swords shot out from the bushes on either side, aiming straight at his left and right side.

Luckily he has an intuition long ago, and without advancing or retreating, just stood on the spot and drew out his sword. "Clang clang", not only did he force his enemy to retreat, but he also injured one of them.

30 odd warriors came out from the bushes and behind the tress, and one of them is Wu Tingwei, and he was heavily surrounded.

Xiang Shaolong stood there holding his sword, obviously not afraid at all.

Wu Tingwei hid behind the warriors and called out arrogantly, “Dog slave, let’s see where you can escape this time.”

Xiang Shaolong smiled suavely and replied, “This time? I don’t think I was the one who escaped the last time, right?”

Wu Tingwei had thought that he would beg for mercy, and did not expect him to be so merciless with his words. He was furious and roared, “Kill him for me.”

Xiang Shaolong is such an experienced fighter, and he understands the logic of striking the enemy first, especially since he is outnumbered now. Wu Tingwei has just opened his mouth but he has already turned into the crowd of warriors with his sword, slashing and kicking, like a tiger in a herd of sheep, seriously injuring a handful of them, thus interfering with their movements.

The warriors have never fought in such a way that is totally without rules but seeks only efficiency, besides they are afraid of this action that will clearly defy their Master’s orders, and on seeing his bravery, most of them just stood there for show.

Xiang Shaolong was furious with Wu Tingwei for molesting Shu’er yesterday, so he was totally ruthless in his attacks, executing the Mozi swordplay to perfection. His movements were mysterious, ever-changing, broad movements yet his techniques were exquisite, suddenly attacking and retreating, with a flying kick once in a while. In short time, his opponents were all staggering in chaos.

Under the orders of Wu Tingwei, the warriors had no choice but to charge, and they fell one by one, either stuck by the sword or a kick. None of the attacks are fatal, but just enough to make them lose the ability to fight back.

In the blink of an eye, only the 10 warriors standing in front of Wu Tingwei protecting him were left.

Xiang Shaolong gave a cold snort, his pair of cold and aggressive eyes staring icily at Wu Tingwei, his sword pointing forward, walking strongly and steadily step by step towards Wu Tingwei and that 10 warriors.

Wu Tingwei did not expect him to be so brave and sharp, felling 10 odd men and yet he's not even panting. He felt a shiver, and while ordering his men to attack, he retreated towards the back instead.

Xiang Shaolong will certainly not let him off, so he dashed forward, his sword slashing. One of the warriors raised his sword to block him, there was a 'clang', and that warrior actually fell and rolled to the ground with the impact. Obviously the strength of his arm is extremely frightening.

All the warriors were startled, afraid that he will injure Wu Tingwei, and they all converged with their swords ready to attack.

But this time Xiang Shaolong did not press on his attack, instead he executed a series of movements to defend himself.

Two of the warriors thought that he is now exhausted and were about to take the opportunity to attack but they suddenly realized that their

opponent's defense was so tight that they have no way of attacking. Even more alarming is that his defense secretly allows him to attack at will as well, holding them at bay, giving them a feeling that they can no longer retreat.

That is the essence of the Mozi swordplay, hiding an attack while defending. When Xiang Shaolong was fighting with the last Juzi of Mohism, Yuan Zong, he was unable to execute any offensive moves at all. The 2 men now is far worse than he was in the past, so naturally their attacks are negligible.

The 2 of them panicked and were about to retreat when there was a flash of sword and the two warriors fell back bleeding.

Xiang Shaolong took this opportunity when everyone else was in a frenzy to dash past his enemy's protective barrier and go straight towards Wu Tingwei.

Wu Tingwei hardened himself to stand still and defend with his sword.

But who would have expected Xiang Shaolong to rapidly retreat again, right into the midst of the advancing warriors.

After felling 4 warriors, he leapt towards the retreating Wu Tingwei.

“Clang!”

A series of 7 sword attacks, Wu Tingwei was forced into the woods by him and the remaining warriors collapsed on the ground.

“Dang!”

Wu Tingwei's sword flew out of his hands, his back knocked onto a large tree. His face paled and he yelled, "What a bold slave, how dare you be rude."

Xiang Shaolong's eyes shot out an icy cold stare and said frostily, "If you have the guts, call me slave again." The tip of his sword pointed at this conceited young man's throat.

Xiang Shaolong is not at all concerned that others may come here, because this is something dishonorable, so Wu Tingwei must have made arrangements to send the nearby servants away.

Wu Tingwei was frightened by his forcefulness that even his body started shaking and asked hoarsely, "Do you dare to hurt me?" but he still do not have the guts to take the risk of calling him slave.

Xiang Shaolong's face was expressionless and asked quietly, "Where is Master Tao?"

Wu Tingwei was almost crying when he said, "I only sent some people to hold him back!"

Xiang Shaolong secretly thought to himself that he wouldn't dare to go overboard anyway, so he smiled and asked, "Grand Young Master, you don't believe that I'll hurt you? All the more I want to blind you in one eye, let's see if you'll believe me."

Wu Tingwei saw that his smile was cold and heartless, and is even more chilling than if he was fierce and furious. He finally broke down and

exclaimed, “No!”

Xiang Shaolong’s long sword continued towards its goal.

At the same time Wu Tingwei was screaming, a dainty gasp was heard from behind Xiang Shaolong.

Wu Tingwei thought that his eye will be lost, his whole body weakened and at the same moment that he peed in fright, the long sword slanted a little, brushed past his face and pierced into the tree trunk, the difference of only a few millimeters.

“Bang!”

Xiang Shaolong’s right leg kicked his thigh.

Wu Tingwei flew to one side, Xiang Shaolong turned around with his sword and blocked the sword of the beauty Wu Tingfang.

Xiang Shaolong looked at her coldly and asked quietly, “So is Grand Young Missy involved as well?”

Wu Tingfang was so furious that her face reddened, and she gritted her teeth and uttered, “I’m going to kill you.” Her sword came attacking like the Changjiang River, her swordplay far better than her elder brother’s, just that she lacks the strength and experience.

Xiang Shaolong had an idea, and he retreated as he fought, and in short time

he lured her deep into the isolated woods.

Wu Tingfang saw that she could not defeat him even with her ferocious attacks and the more upset and impatient she was, the more distracted she became. She was panting, and after slashing 2 more times, her sword flew out of her hands with a 'dang'.

Xiang Shaolong returned his sword to his scabbard, took a step forward and hugged her. He carried her up and pressed her to a tree, looking at her sweet and dainty face with his head tilted to one side.

Wu Tingfang was totally exhausted, so she only made a show of trying to struggle before collapsing in his arms, asking in fear and anger, "What do you want?"

Xiang Shaolong replied gently, "Compensation of course."

Wu Tingfang was startled and tried to struggle again with her remaining strength, but Xiao Shaolong took the opportunity to use his chest and legs to rub against her sensitive, prohibited spots, and her struggle soon became a strong reaction to his movements.

Since she was born, this is the first time she has been teased so rudely by a man this way.

Lian Jin has hugged her before as well, but she pushed him away immediately. This is the first time something like this has happened.

She was angry, but her body started feeling waves of strange pleasure.

She did not take part in Wu Tingwei's plan at all, but she saw the whole process when she went after him after finding out that there's something amiss. She saw Xiang Shaolong's heroism, frighteningly accurate strategies and swordsmanship that is comparable to Lian Jin's. And there's something that even Lian Jin cannot compare, this person seems to have endless stamina. When he is cold he makes one shiver, when he is gentle and smiling he looks suave, and even now when she is being molested by him, she finds it difficult to really hate him.

When the pleasure in her body became stronger, she moaned, and her lips were locked with his.

Wu Tingfang was shocked and embarrassed, his tongue attacked through her locked teeth. She moaned and was lost in her first kiss with a man, the thought of Lian Jin disappearing far from her mind immediately.

Sounds of people walking could be heard from outside the woods.

Xiang Shaolong left her lips, nibbled on her earlobes and said, "To be able to kiss Grand Young Missy's sweet lips, even death would be worth it." He let her go and walked out with large strides.

Wu Tingfang's body weakened and she slid down the truck, collapsing on the ground, all her hatred disappearing without a trace. Her body still felt that shameless excitement and pleasure.

When Xiang Shaolong walked back to the path outside the woods where he was attacked, a large burly man with a gold belt and huge eyes were reprimanding the kneeling warriors and Wu Tingwei.

Tao Fang stood at the side with his head lowered, and when he saw him coming, signaled him with his eyes.

Xiang Shaolong made way for a seriously injured warrior who was being carried away before he walked towards the burly man, knelt down and paid his respects.

He was careful when he struck with his sword, only making the other party lose the ability to fight, but his first few blows were a bit harder since he was trying to scare them.

That burly man turned his head around and asked coldly, "Where is Tingfang?"

Before Xiang Shaolong could reply, Wu Tingfang's voice could be heard from behind, "Tingfang is here. His swordsmanship is really good, I was unable to hurt him."

The burly man's expression cleared a little, and he turned to Wu Tingwei and his men first and bellowed, "All of you scram!"

Wu Tingwei dare not even take a look at Xiang Shaolong, and scuttled off with his warriors like a defeated cock.

The man turned towards Xiang Shaolong and said, “Get up!”

Xiang Shaolong stood up respectfully, and realized that Wu Tingfang was standing next to him, and glancing at him.

Tao Fang was totally perplexed and kept looking at the two of them.

That man looked at his daughter for a moment before turning towards Xiang Shaolong and said, “Excellent! Injuring 30 odd men and yet none of the attacks are fatal. This is the first time I’ve seen such swordsmanship. I, Wu Yingyuan will bet on you winning the duel with Lian Jin.”

Xiang Shaolong was quietly laughing that no one in this era will understand human anatomy better than him as he uttered self-effacing words.

Wu Yingyuan sized him up again and said with a smile, “There are very few Zhaos who are as tall and large as you, but for Qins it’s not a very rare trait.”

Xiang Shaolong had a strange intuition, and felt that this Wu Yingyuan seems to take pride that he has Qin blood in him. Maybe he has this thinking because he has traveled much, thus more open-minded and knows how great the Qins are.

Wu Yingyuan seemed quite impressed with him and said, “I’m going to inspect the large farm 20 miles north of here, Shaolong come with me then!”

Wu Tingfang called out, “Father! I want to go too.”

Everyone was surprised and looked at her.

Wu Tingfang lowered her pretty face, her fingers twiddling with the corner of her clothes, looking exceptionally adorable.

Chapter 12

Love at the Maple Tree Valley

Xiang Shaolong and 150 warriors accompanied the Wu father and daughter and left via the north gate, galloping into the large plains.

Wu Tingfang was in high spirits and rode way ahead. Wu Yingyuan was concerned that something would happen to his daughter and was about to order his warriors to give chase when Xiang Shaolong saw this as an opportunity. It seems that Wu Tingfang is deliberately creating a chance for him, and immediately volunteered himself and went after her.

The two horses ran wildly for more than 10 miles one behind the other, and came to a valley before Wu Tingfang slowed down. By now the two horses were puffing from the run.

Xiang Shaolong went next to her and turned his head around. Wu Yingyuan and the rest were long gone.

Wu Tingfang laughed daintily, “No need to look! This is a shortcut that only I know. They won’t be coming here.”

Xiang Shaolong need no further instructions, and just turned around, picked her up and hugged her. Ignoring her weak pretexts, he started kissing her neck, and finished up with a hard and hot kiss on her soft little mouth.

Wu Tingfang's reaction was passionate, obviously it's the first time she experienced this and can't get enough of it.

By the time they got tired from kissing, they have already left the valley.

Wu Tingfang laid her head on her shoulder, looked at him and said shyly, "You're really bold, no other man has dared to be as rude to me as you."

Xiang Shaolong pretended to be serious as he replied, "No, no! I'm just a coward!"

Wu Tingfang knows that he still remembers the other day she called him a coward. She laughed and said "Tingfang knew right away that you're not a person who easily obey anyone, grandfather is the same."

Xiang Shaolong shockingly said "Even what you think is right or wrong, don't tell it to anyone else, if it gets to master's ear my life will be in danger".

Wu Tingfang laughs and sits straight up, steering the horse to stop and says "Look there! Crossing the valley ahead and over a small hill you'll be able to see the gate to the pasture. In the valley there's a small beautiful river, running through the pasture, why don't we go there and have fun while father isn't here yet?"

Xiang Shaolong already calculated that in this era if he can capture a girl's heart she will be braver than any girl in the 21st century. He's happy inside because he defeated Lian Jin, laughs and says "Anyone who doesn't want to

have fun with you is stupid and crazy!” He steered the horse into the valley after he said.

It’s beginning of fall season, the whole valley is filled with leaves, beautiful like heaven on earth, a small river’s current running from a rock and created a small pond.

Wu Tingfang is still childish, she happily jumps down from the horse and runs to the river bank.

Xiang Shaolong runs after her hugged her belly, his hands takes her belt off. Wu Tingfang shocked, catches his hands and asks “What are you doing?” Xiang Shaolong laughs and says “The water is clear like this, don’t you want to swim?”

Wu Tingfang lowers her head and says “I can’t! If my hair gets wet father will definitely find out about us and would not forgive us.”

Xiang Shaolong says “We can just swim in shallow water only. I guarantee your hair won’t get wet.”

Wu Tingfang flushed, releases her hand and whispers “All right! Don’t let my hair get wet, you think I don’t know what you want to do?”

Xiang Shaolong is happy, thinking to himself a beauty like this, even if he dies he won’t let go, his hands begin their actions and taking her clothes off.

Xiang Shaolong laughed, “I remember now there’s no dry cloth to wipe my

body, and it's inappropriate. Why not I seek compensation from you now, listen to how refreshing the waterfall sounds."

Wu Tingfang was about to listen closely when Xiang Shaolong kissed her hard, his hands willfully and rudely roaming her naked body.

How can she remember to listen to the sound of the waterfall? The intoxicating feeling earlier has not fully receded and it began crashing towards her again. Amidst her urgent moaning, her limbs unconsciously wrapped tightly around this man who has captured her heart.

Xiang Shaolong may be a flirtatious man, but he's not lecherous. It's just that he knows that a girl like Wu Tingfang who has just experienced romance is especially fickle and pliable. If he did not strike while the iron is hot and claim her for himself first, maybe when she sees the handsome Lian Jin, she will turn onto his embrace again.

But if he takes her for the first time, he will become the first man in her life, and even Lian Jin will find it difficult to rock their intimate relationship when that happens.

And with Lian Jin's intelligence, it's not difficult to realize that this beauty has already given him her most precious chastity, and this is the blow that he wants to give Lian Jin. No matter how nonchalant Lian Jin is, this matter involves a man's pride and attraction, so that fellow will surely be unable to take it.

And his have to achieve his goal of attacking Lian Jin.

If the Wu family were to find out about this matter, it's no big deal as well. As long as he can defeat Lian Jin, the King of Zhao will certainly look at him differently and the Wu family would not dare to do anything to him. Maybe even Lady Ya will protect him as well.

Once he thought about this, he knows that he is beginning to become more ruthless in order to reach his goals. But in this era where the strong is the leader, he has no other choice.

So with this mentality in mind, he used the gentlest and pleasing method to make this beautiful young lady lose her chastity to him. He followed up the act with tenderness and honeyed words to let her enjoy the sweetest pleasure a woman can get from a man.

When the two of them reached the big pasture that was miles wide, Wu Yingyuan's men just started to show up from afar.

The person in charge of the pasture welcomed them warmly, especially when he saw the proud Grand Young Missy leaning against him daintily, he fawned even more towards Xiang Shaolong.

The big pasture is a huge piece of land surrounded by mountains and water on three sides, and the only flat piece of ground is in the east where a large river flowed horizontally across. The hanging bridge is the only way in and out, and with high walls on each side, making it look a country of its own.

There were 10 over camps of Zhao soldiers outside the pasture, obviously the uncountable number of horses, cows and goats in the pasture is the lifeline

of Handan.

The 2 of them were looking around when Wu Yingyuan came over with his men. He lightly chided Wu Tingfang for a moment before turning to Xiang Shaolong and said, “Come! Let me bring Shaolong around!”

Xiang Shaolong was flattered and after changing his horse, he galloped into the pasture. Wu Tingfang was of course following him.

Wu Yingyuan recounted the joys and pains of running a pasture, showing that he is extremely experienced and insightful.

The 3 of them came to a little hill full of sheep in the end. Wu Tingfang’s inner child came out and she jumped off the horse to play with the sheep.

The two stood side by side on their horses, viewing the beautiful scenery of the majestic mountains.

Wu Yingyuan seems to remark offhandedly, “Fang’er seems to like Shaolong!”

Xiang Shaolong is unsure of his hidden meaning, and was awkwardly silent.

Wu Yingyuan smiled slightly and said, “That’s good too! I’ve never liked Lian Jin. This person is unfathomable and is in cahoots with Wu Hei. It’s just that Father trusts them, so there’s nothing I can do to them.”

Xiang Shaolong had a thought, Tao Fang must be Wu Yingyuan’s man, that’s

why he trusted him as well and revealed his true feelings. He probed, “I heard Master Tao said, Master has the intention of marrying Grand Young Missy into the imperial family...”

Wu Yingyuan gave a cold snort and said, “My numerous arguments with Father is precisely because of this. Father is getting on in age, and cannot see clearly the situation now.”

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in surprise, “Young Master!”

Wu Yingyuan looked at him, his eyes glaring and asked coldly, “Shaolong! Tell me honestly, where did you come from, what blood flows in your body.”

Xiang Shaolong knows that if he has to make up a story, he cannot hesitate and immediately replied, “Since Young Master thinks so highly of Shaolong, I dare not hide anything from you. Actually I am the offspring of a Qin man, who has wandered into the mountain regions, and a local woman. I did not even tell Master Tao about this.”

Because Wu Yingyuan already had such a thinking in his mind, he was not suspicious at all. He thought for a moment and asked, “If I were to give Fang’er to you, would you promise to love her well for the rest of your life?”

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic, but immediately asked dejectedly, “But why would Master agree to it?”

Wu Yingyuan replied impatiently, “Forget about him first.”

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly made his promise.

The corners of Wu Yingyuan's mouth curved up into a slight smile and he said joyfully, "I admire you not wholly because of your outstanding swordsmanship, or your outstanding reflexes and intelligence when dealing with the horse thieves. The most important matter is that you risked your own life and stayed behind to fight the thieves so that your comrades can leave safely. Such loyalty to your master and friends is what reassures me into giving Fang'er to you. This is a secret agreement for now, and besides Tao Fang, you must not let a 4th person know about this, and that includes Fang'er."

Xiang Shaolong felt that he seems to have some plans in his mind, and needs his wits and swordsmanship, so he lowered his voice and asked, "If there's anything Young Master needs Shaolong to do, just let me know."

A look of surprise flashed past Wu Yingyuan's eyes, and he complimented him, "Tao Fang was right about you, with your keen observation, you will certainly be someone famous in future."

He paused for a moment before continuing, "Father is really getting old, and does not know that the situation is rapidly changing."

He added, "Ever since the 3 states declared independence, the first to attack among the 3 states Zhao, Wei and Han is Marquis Wei. The Qin in the west, Qi in the east, Han and Chu in the south, Zhao in the north, none of them were spared from his attacks. Even Handan, this sturdy large city was captured by him for 2 years. If not for the state of Qi's help, the Weis would

not have retreated.”

That 3 months when Xiang Shaolong was with Yuan Zong they often talked about the affairs of the world, and is not as ignorant as when he first arrived. He added, “But later on the Wei soldiers lost in the battle of Maling under Wu Qi and Sun Bin. Later Qin, Qi and Zhao continuously attacked Wei, making them lose able generals and soldiers and a huge piece of land so now they’re not as powerful as before.

Wu Yingyuan was very impressed with his knowledge and nodded his head, “There’s not many in Handan who has your insight. Shaolong, tell me, who do you think is the strongest.”

Xiang Shaolong replied without a thought, “Of course it’s Qin, the world will ultimately be conquered by Qin.” He secretly laughed to himself, not only is there no one in Handan who has his insight, but no one in the entire warring states will be as confident of this as he is.

Wu Yingyuan was startled, “Although I thinking highly of Qin, but I’m not as sure as you are. Why would you have this thinking?”

Xiang Shaolong was almost speechless, luckily an idea flashed past and he replied, “The key point is whether the various states in the east can join forces to repel Qin, and looking at the war between Yan and Zhao now, we know the outcome of that.”

Wu Yingyuan replied, “What you meant is ‘Lian Heng’ and ‘He Zong’.”

The former means the weak joining forces to attack one strong force.

The latter means one strong force attacking all weak forces.

These are the two extreme policies during the warring states period.

Qin is in the west, the other 6 strong states, Qi, Wei, Zhao, Han, Chu and Yan are at the south. Any state that joins forces with Qin will be a unification between the south and west, and thus named 'Lian Heng'. If the 6 states were to join forces, it'll be unification of the north and south, and they're referred to as 'He Zong'.

The situation now is getting more and more obvious, the 6 states are gradually losing the ability to fight against Qin on their own. Although there were small victories, it's not enough to change the whole situation. But if they were to join forces, their strength will far surpass Qin. Therefore what Qin fears most is the unification of the 6 states. As the saying goes, 'the only fear is the unification of the world against oneself'.

Xiang Shaolong nodded his head like an expert and said, "At the moment which state in the southeast is willing to maintain status quo. All the rulers wants to take this opportunity to expand their land and fight for gains so that they can become ruler of the world, so it's impossible for them to unite."

Wu Yingyuan looked at him in shock and said, "Luckily you are not my enemy, but my future son-in-law."

Of course Xiang Shaolong understood his underlying meaning, which is to say

that if that is not the case, he'll certainly get rid of him. He was about to speak when Wu Tingfang returned and said with a dainty smile, "Father has never enjoyed a conversation as much as this, Shaolong is really capable."

Wu Yingyuan looked heavenward and laughed for a long time before saying, "Father has to take a look at the account books, Fang'er will accompany Shaolong around!" and he left on his horse.

Xiang Shaolong jumped down from his horse.

Wu Tingfang smiled coquettishly at him and rolled her eyes, "It seems that Father likes you a lot? When will Shaolong ask him for my hand, then Fang'er will be able to be with you everyday, so don't you find me irritating then."

After Xiang Shaolong swore to heaven that he will not change his heart, he walked slowly while holding the 2 majestic horses saying, "After I win Lian Jin and have fame and status, I'll marry you immediately. My only fear is if I will pass your Grandfather's barrier."

Wu Tingfang's eyes reddened and said, "If Grandfather does not agree, Fang'er will die in front of him."

Xiang Shaolong exclaimed in surprise, "You mustn't do that, I could always elope with you and they won't be able to find us."

Wu Tingfang tugged at his sleeve happily and said with joy, "A man must keep to his words, you must not regret in future because you can't bear to give up fame and riches or because you've found a new love. I've even given

myself to you, you must treasure me for the rest of your life!”

Xiang Shaolong hurriedly said some assuring words. This beauty’s happiness is totally in his control now, so how can he not make her happy. He did not expect that he would be able to have wives and concubines, but in order to support them, especially a rich young lady like Wu Tingfang who is used to luxury and being served, is not going to be easy. When he thought about how penniless he was while in Wu An, he still feels a little fear.

Wu Tingfang suddenly said, “You have to be careful of Lian Jin, he’s really formidable. And I think that even though he dare not kill you, but he will at least try to maim you before he gives up.”

Xiang Shaolong laughed and said, “Don’t worry! If I cannot defeat even him, then I’m not competent enough to marry a pretty girl like you.”

Chapter 13

Comparison of love

When Xiang Shaolong returned to Handan, it's already dusk. After saying sweet farewells to Wu Tingfang, he hurriedly rode back to the guest house.

The biggest benefit he got from this trip is the beauty Wu Tingfang and establishing friendship and understanding with her father. Also, under Wu Yingyuan's instructions, he is more familiar with the behavior of horses and the techniques of riding.

For someone like him who was in the elite force undergoing strict training, what he has learnt in a day is equivalent to what an average person will learn in a year.

When he reached the guesthouse, he was shocked to see Zhao soldiers standing guard at the entrance. Luckily he bumped into Li Shan and found out that after the King of Zhao heard about the matters regarding Prince Shaoyuan and Wu Tingwei, he warned everyone not to touch Xiang Shaolong and even transferred his guards to protect him.

On one hand he was surprised at how well informed the King of Zhao was, but he has this feeling that this duel is not as simple as it seems.

He was still deep in thought when Li Shan told him, "Lady Ya ordered you to go to her residence immediately after you come back, the horse carriage is

waiting for you!”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly lamenting. He’s not superman, these few days he has been making love day and night with the 3 beauties Shu’er, Lady Ya and Wu Tingfang, and each time he did his best. He had just been involved with Wu Tingfang, so how should he satisfy Lady Ya now.

He is so tortured that he almost groaned. He hurriedly went back and changed his clothes, consoled Shu’er who could not bear to let him leave, went up the horse carriage and fell asleep, ignoring everything else. When he woke up he realized it’s deep into the night and he’s already in the Lady’s residence. Lady Ya slept curled up next to him, like a tame little cat.

Xiang Shaolong felt a warmth surrounding his heart and after calling her twice, realized that she’s still having sweet dreams. He gently kissed her face, eyes, nose, mouth before carefully covering her with the blanket and stood up to walk to the window.

He stretched lazily and felt refreshed and recharged, thinking to himself that if he has to handle a few women now, his stamina would be able to take it.

No matter what, after he wins Lian Jin, he must go and look for Ying Zheng, it’ll be good even if he can take a look at him. If he did not see this great man who created China single handedly, he’ll not die in peace.

But there’s one thing that he can’t figure out. Handan is such a heavily guarded city, how is an important person like him who has the criteria to ascend the Qin throne going to slip out? If he doesn’t return to Xianyang,

how can he ascend the throne then?

The Handan city in movies is just an unguarded city, but it's totally different in real life. How will Ying Zheng return to become Emperor Qin?

In the past Ying Zheng's father Yi Ren had the help of the wealthy Lu Buwei before he could escape successfully. Since the Zhaos had this as an example, they would not let the same thing happen again. Even if Lu Buwei is not coming, and the Zhaos have forgotten about what he has done, it'll still be difficult to use the same ploy again.

Besides it's not something that can be accomplished in a few days. From the time Lu Buwei met Yi Ren, until the time Yi Ren returned to Qin, it took more than 10 years. If not for the battle of Changping where 4,000,000 Zhaos were killed by the Qins, Yi Ren and Lu Buwei would not have taken the risk to return to Qin for fear of revenge. And they had no choice but to leave behind Zhao Ji and her son Ying Zheng.

How old is Ying Zheng this year, does he look as tall and large as the Qins? He really wants to know, if only there is someone he can ask.

"Shaolong!"

Shaolong was just thinking that he'll be executed if someone finds out about this, so he was really startled when he heard his name.

He turned around.

The extremely beautiful and flimsily dressed Lady Ya was looking at him with a coquettishly smile.

Xiang Shaolong replied, "I thought you were asleep, you really startled me."

Lady Ya moved over and hugged him tightly from behind, her slender arms twining around his neck and said, "If I don't pretend to be asleep, how I can test if you're really gentle. I thought you were lying to me, but when I saw that you were really startled by me, I realized you really did not know that I was feigning sleep."

Xiang Shaolong was secretly feeling guilty. He was deep in thought about betraying the state of Zhao, but he accidentally hit the right note instead, which is really lucky.

Smelling her intoxicating fragrance, feeling the touch of her skin, Xiang Shaolong's hands can't help but start caressing and kneading her back, and of course he will not let her perky bottom off as well.

Lady Ya closed her eyes and enjoyed his loving touches, and mumbled dreamily, "You don't know how heavy you are, 4 soldiers had so much trouble carrying you in, I'm afraid you'll crush me to death one of these days."

Xiang Shaolong had a lusty thought and replied with a laugh, "But last night Lady was complaining that my movements were not strong enough."

Lady Ya rolled her eyes at him and left his embrace. She held up his hand and

said, “Actually once I saw you, I wanted to make love with you immediately, but I don’t know why now I feel like having a heart to heart talk with you instead. Come! You should be hungry by now, shall we go to the little pavilion in the back garden and enjoy the moon and a feast?”

This is the first time Xiang Shaolong heard her talking to him in such an agreeable manner, and saw that she is not only looking for carnal satisfaction from him and knows that this wanton has started to develop feelings for him. He has a sense of accomplishment from conquering this difficult woman. Just as he was about to speak, his stomach started rumbling.

Lady Ya was amused and after laughing coquettishly, cast a flirtatious look at him and led him out of the room.

The clear moon hung high up in the sky, illuminating the whole garden and the little 2-story pavilion.

Lady Ya sighed quietly and said, “When I woke up this morning, I actually made up my mind not to look for you again, or maybe not to look for you so soon. But in less than an instant I ordered my men to bring you here, but later I thought it was inappropriate. So I changed to getting my servants to fetch you in a horse carriage. Who would have expected you to have gone out of the city with Wu Yingyuan and his daughter so early in the morning, making me wait a whole day restlessly for you. I didn’t want to see anyone else, even when my brother asked for me, I feigned illness not to go.”

Listening to this ultimate beauty revealing her true feelings, Xiang Shaolong only felt sweetness in his heart.

Ever since the time machine brought him back to this warring states period 2000 years ago, things have been crashing in him wave by wave, not giving him the chance to think properly all that has happened. He can only struggle to survive.

Now he is suddenly clear minded. Heavens! He's really in the ancient world, coming into contact with those people of a different era, talking, even fighting and making love.

His only regret is he was unable to ask that crazy Ma a few more questions, regarding what this is all about.

Hasn't all these already happened? Why is it now he still has a past, present and future, just like his old reality.

If he were to change what has already happened, what repercussions will it have on the future?

Or are there countless past, and what he is facing now is only one of them.

Everything is as surreal as a dream.

The most realistic time, will only appear when he is embroiled with beauties.

Just like Lady Ya before his eyes.

"What are you thinking!"

Xiang Shaolong was jolted from this thoughts, and smiled bitterly. He may never be able to reveal his inner thoughts.

He removed his cape, walked towards her and draped it over her. He moved to face her, hugging her tightly and at the same time grabbed her slender hands, asking gently, “Why are you so honest with me? Aren’t you afraid I’ll see through your weakness and control you?”

Lady Ya smiled, “Of course I’m not! Control me all you want! I’ve been troubled the whole day, and thought about it the whole day, and realized that I really have never been happy. Hai! I’ve been numb about the matters between men and women long ago. If you grew up in the palace or a duke’s household, you will understand my meaning.”

Xiang Shaolong asked in surprise, “You were born into the royal family, you should not want of anything, and able to get everything you want. Why is it that when you talk about the palace, it seems like you’re talking about the scariest place on earth?”

Lady Ya snuggled deeper into his arms, as if she is trying to get security and warmth from him and said sadly, “It seems that during the Zhou dynasty in the past, the royal family and dukes’ family were restricted by traditions and ceremonial etiquettes, and it’s a rule to choose a wife from the other royal and dukes’ families. Everything has to be done according to the law, no one dares to override it. But today, the palace has become the most ugly and promiscuous place. I saw with my own eyes the countless evil licentious acts my father, brothers and elders engaged in. For example they kept a few boys and wanted them to wear make-up, it’s truly disgusting. My imperial uncle

likes to draw on the walls of the hall, embarrassing pictures of men and women coupling, and even invited lots of his officials to drink and make merry with the palace maids, and I... hai! I really do not want to say further.”

Xiang Shaolong vaguely guessed that something incestuous may have been involved, and he did not want to think about it either. He nodded his head and said, “It’s better left unsaid, forget about it then.”

Lady Ya’s eyes reddened, and said piteously, “Shaolong! Only you can help me forget the frightening past.”

Xiang Shaolong was ecstatic, and took the opportunity to say, “But first you can no longer be with other men.”

Lady Ya was stunned, “You know about it!”

Xiang Shaolong sighed secretly to himself, the whole city knows about it, how can I not know? He nodded his head.

Lady Ya looked at his face for a long while, turned around and lightly pushed him away.

Xiang Shaolong was perplexed and lowered his head to scrutinize her expression.

Lady Ya’s alert and jet black eyes stared at him, her countenance turning icy and said flatly, “Are you looking down on me in your heart?”

Xiang Shaolong felt a headache coming on, this woman is really unpredictable, but he knows at this time he cannot back down. He replied coldly, "If you continue to live the life of having countless 'face heads', I will really look down on you."

Lady Ya is totally helpless when she sees his chauvinistic attitude, and she softened and called out, "Shaolong! Hug me."

Xiang Shaolong shook his head and said, "If you do not promise me, I cannot obey you."

Lady Ya was in a frenzy as she replied, "But you cannot accompany me the whole day, and sometimes you will go out to war. Don't you know that loneliness can kill?" And she sighed sadly, "I have everything, and don't care for anything. Only obtaining different men, can give me the feeling of novelty and excitement for the time. All right! If you promise to stay by my side the whole day, I will chase all the other men away."

Xiang Shaolong smiled, "If there's no suffering from pining, how can there be joy from reunion. Going too far will not accomplish anything. You will only value something if you get it after much suffering. If Lady does not learn this rule for happiness, you can forget about being happy in your life, it's no use even if I try to help you."

Lady Ya thought for a moment, a look of admiration flashed past her pretty eyes and said quietly, "Your thinking is very unique, very refreshing, making me think about things I've never thought of before. I'm exactly going too far and not accomplishing anything, that's why I don't have the feeling of

happiness.

She continued with a coquettish laugh, “This is the first time I feel that it’s interesting to have a conversation with a man.” Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, of course it’s interesting. Such a oft-talked about topic in the 21st century, of course it’ll be a breakthrough in thinking for people like you. Suddenly, he knows for sure that he will be able to snatch Lady Ya from Lian Jin’s hands as well, because Lian Jin lacks the knowledge of 2000 years.

My god! That is such a long distance away!

Lady Ya rolled her eyes at him and asked, “Your smile is very hateful, are you laughing at me.” And she changed back to a naïve and lovable young girl.

Is she a little girl who has never grown up or matured because she has always been pampered?

Xiang Shaolong had an idea, and pointed at the moon and told her the story of the cowherd and weaving girl. He ended with a sigh, “The meeting of the golden wind and jade dew, surpasses everything else on earth.”*

*Poem by Qin Guan from Song Dynasty – Immortals on a magpie bridge

Lady Ya was engrossed in the story, and looked up at the empty space beside the clear moon, imagining the magpie bridge there and sighed, “Shaolong thought of these two sentences, the intonation is good, and the image brought up intoxicating.”

Xiang Shaolong forced himself to say, "Of course I thought of it, have you heard anyone else saying it?"

Lady Ya laughed, "You don't have to be so uptight. Tell me, why do you want me to listen to such a sad and helpless story?"

Xiang Shaolong came to her side and leaned into her, and said nonchalantly, "I only want you to guess, when the cowherd and weaving girl meets once a year, what would they do."

Lady Ya chuckled and said with a flirtatious smile, "Of course they'll do what we were doing last night!"

Xiang Shaolong was aroused by her flirtatious moves and said a little roughly, "Answer me quickly if you want Xiang Shaolong or other men like Lian Jin. You can only choose one, once you promise me I will carry you into the pavilion immediately."

Lady Ya stared at him with concentration for a moment, and replied with a smile, "If you can make another 2 poem verses, something as moving as the earlier verse, I will promise to become only your woman."

Xiang Shaolong was secretly elated, and thought he will use the god of poem Li Bai's famous words to excite her, and said offhandedly, "Have you never seen them grieving in the mirror over their white hair, silky black at dawn, snowy white at dusk." These 2 verses, to a woman, is really a sore point.

Lady Ya's body shivered, and she lowered her head and recited it twice,

limitless love flowing out from her bright eyes and she said gently, “Xiang Shaolong! You’ve won, carry me inside!”

The 2 of them had just entered the pavilion and was about to go into the bedroom when a pretty maid hurried up to report, “Lady! Master Lian is here.”

Xiang Shaolong was shaken and put Lady Ya down, staring at her icily, naturally he meant to say that since Lian Jin is allowed to come into your residence at will, therefore he can go into your room anytime to look for you.

Lady Ya first instructed the pretty maid, “Go and stop him, tell him I don’t wish to see him tonight.”

After the maid left, she looked at Xiang Shaolong in reproach, “Didn’t I make myself clear already?”

Before Xiang Shaolong could reply, Lian Jin’s voice can be heard from downstairs calling out, “Since Lian Jin is already here, why won’t Lady let me hear even a few words of your melodious voice?”

Xiang Shaolong was secretly complimenting Lian Jin for really having a way with women.

Indeed Lady Ya’s expression showed she is at a loss, obviously Lian Jin has stirred some beautiful memories.

Lian Jin added, “The night is clear with the moon bright, the scenery is

breathhtaking. Won't Lady be lonely sleeping all alone?"

Lady Ya was shocked awake, she secretly stole a glance at Xiang Shaolong and saw his unhappy expression. She suddenly felt dislike for Lian Jin and said coquettishly, "Now you've heard my voice, leave quickly!"

Xiang Shaolong saw that she did not make things clear with Lian Jin, and knew that she still harbor some feelings for him. He felt discontented and snorted unhappily.

Lian Jin immediately called out furiously, "Who is up there!"

The guards started shouting, followed by the sounds of weapons clashing and groans of pain. Suddenly footsteps were heard coming up the pavilion and Lian Jin walked up, with guards running after him.

Lady Ya commanded the guards, "It's nothing of your business here, go down."

Lian Jin stared at Xiang Shaolong, his usual calm lost, his eyes seems to be shooting flames and he said each word slowly, "It's you again, Xiang Shaolong."

Lady Ya was about to reprimand Lian Jin when Xiang Shaolong led her towards the door and said, "Lady please go into the room."

Lady Ya has no intention of leaving these two rivals here alone, but she knows that if she does not listen to Xiang Shaolong's instructions, it would

mean letting Lian Jin win. She will then forever lose this proud man, so she bit her lips and went into the room obediently.

Lian Jin saw this beauty who has never really surrendered actually surrendering to Xiang Shaolong's 'lascivious power', he was so furious that he almost coughed out blood, and was unable to speak for a moment.

Xiang Shaolong's ferocious eyes shot icily at him and said with a stern voice, "Was it you who instigated Grand Young Master yesterday to touch my Yan woman?"

Lian Jin is an extremely deep person, and after his anger subsided, his calm returned. He smiled nonchalantly, "Not only the Yan woman, even that Su Nu of yours, I was the one who informed Prince Shaoyuan to snatch her away."

Xiang Shaolong looked heavenward and laughed sadly, and when he looked at Lian Jin again, he was expressionless. He said quietly, "Fine! If I, Xiang Shaolong, allow you to live beyond the day after tomorrow, then I will change my surname to that of yours, scum!

Naturally Lian Jin does not understand what 'scum' is, but he knows it's nothing good. He laughed and replied, "This is exactly what I want to say to you." He then called out into the room, "When Lian Jin comes again the night after, Lady will not reject my request to be your bedroom guest!" He laughed loudly and went downstairs.

Xiang Shaolong really felt like running after him immediately and have a duel to the death. But if he kills him, he may be executed for going against the

imperial edict, so he had no choice but to swallow his displeasure.

The person responsible for Su Nu's horrendous death, now he knows clearly who is it!

But he will not let that Prince Shaoyuan off as well.

"Is your anger appeased?"

Xiang Shaolong turned around and after looking at Lady Ya who was leaning against the door for a moment, he walked over and carried her up and into the room.

Right now he feels no gentleness or sweetness at all.

What he has now is a thunderstorm of hatred. He needs to appease the pain in his heart, and his candidate is Lady Ya.

Lady Ya hugged him tightly and cried out, "Shaolong you're so good! You took me up to heaven, no man has every treated me so wildly and strongly like you, it's really exhilarating."

Xiang Shaolong, whose anger is finally appeased, was dumbstruck. He treated her in such a beastly manner, yet she praised him from the bottom of her heart, it seems that she is really a little masochistic.

Lady Ya asked, "Why aren't you talking? I will listen to you in future, all right?"

Xiang Shaolong smiled and said, “That’s more like it.”

Lady Ya wriggled a little in protest, and after a while fell into a deep sleep.

However, because Xiang Shaolong took a nap earlier, and he was feeling upset about causing the death of Su Nu, he spent the whole night with his eyes wide open, thinking. He was only able to fall asleep due to weariness just before dawn.

By the time he woke up the sun was already high in the sky and secretly exclaimed to himself. If he lets himself go on like this, he won’t have the energy to fight with Lian Jin tomorrow. He hurriedly got up and made up his mind not to touch women from now until his duel.

He walked out to the hall.

And was immediately stunned.

The Lady Ya who was usually dressed in finery, has changed into a simple set of clothes worn by an average woman, with a thin layer of makeup on her face. She’s not even wearing her earrings, and exudes a different kind of intoxicating beauty.

She was standing on the stairs, obviously just on her way up.

When she saw Xiang Shaolong she smiled broadly at him and came up to hug him, saying “Let common girl serve Master in your routine.”

Xiang Shaolong laughed and asked, “You’d like to become a common girl very much?”

Lady Ya immediately nodded her head, “I want you to accompany me today to go shopping and eating.”

Xiang Shaolong is now in a dilemma, he had promised Wu Tingfang last night to visit her, and Tao Fang will certainly have things to discuss with him. He also wants to find some time to accompany the lonely Shu’er. Hai! If only he knows how to split himself up.

He really felt like hardening his heart and reject Lady Ya.

But he saw that she’s all excited and her expression so looking forward to the day, he can’t bring himself to say anything.

After a short conversation, the two of them strolled out into the streets.

Unknowingly, as they talked and laughed, they came to the huge mansion he passed by the other day while on his way to Lady Ya’s residence, which belonged to someone from another state.

Xiang Shaolong took the opportunity to ask, “Who lives in there, why is it so heavily guarded?”

Lady Ya replied, “Most of them are the hostages sent to us as peace offering by the states that we defeated.”

Xiang Shaolong asked, “Are there anyone who has any special background?”

Lady Ya replied, “All of them are royalty, but the most important person would be Yi Zheng. He’s the only son of Zi Chu from the state of Qin. Hai! But it’s better not mentioning this person.”

Xiang Shaolong asked curiously, “Do you know him?”

Lady Ya blushed, and replied a little unwillingly, “Not only do I know him, but very well too!”

Xiang Shaolong furrowed his brow and asked, “Don’t tell me he’s one of your chamber guests as well, isn’t he just a child?”

According to the depiction in the movie, Emperor Qin was only 13 when he ascended the throne, so won’t he be only 8 or 9 now. Lady Ya won’t even let children off?

Lady Ya replied, “Where did you hear that from, he’s at the most 2 to 3 years younger than you!”

Xiang Shaolong thought to himself, could it be that the history books have recorded it wrongly.

Lady Ya grabbed his arm and shook it, saying, “Just take it as my fault, will you please stop digging out my past affairs?”

Xiang Shaolong dared not continue his questions for fear of arousing her

suspicious, secretly thinking that he'll have more chances in future. Maybe he will be able to get to know this extraordinary famed man through her.

He suggested, "Why don't we return to the guesthouse first, see if there's anything important requiring me."

As long as she can be with him, Lady Ya has no objections and happily replied, "All right! Let me see how pretty is the Yan beauty you have hidden."

Xiang Shaolong was startled, "You know about Shu'er as well?"

Lady Ya was so happy like a carefree little girl. She puffed up her chest and said smugly, "Knowing oneself and the enemy, will win all battles, this is taught in the Art of Sun Zi. I also know that silly lass Wu Tingfang have fallen for you. Lian Jin has really lost badly to you in the battlefield of love."

Xiang Shaolong felt numb and his heart chilled on hearing it. He knows that the Wu residence is filled with King Zhao's spies, because he does not trust the Wu family who has Qin blood flowing in them.

This is no small matter, he must find a chance to tell Wu Yingyuan, or else he may face the possibility that the whole family will be executed.

He was nervous as he walked with the beauty, strolling in the busy Handan streets, stepping on the ancient pathways.

Is this a dream created by crazy Ma's machine?

Xiang Shaolong suddenly felt at a loss.

But he knows that no matter how frightening is the future, he has already fallen deeply in love with this ancient era and the beauty next to him.

End of Book 01